

# IN THESE TIMES

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ITT's 8th Anniversary  
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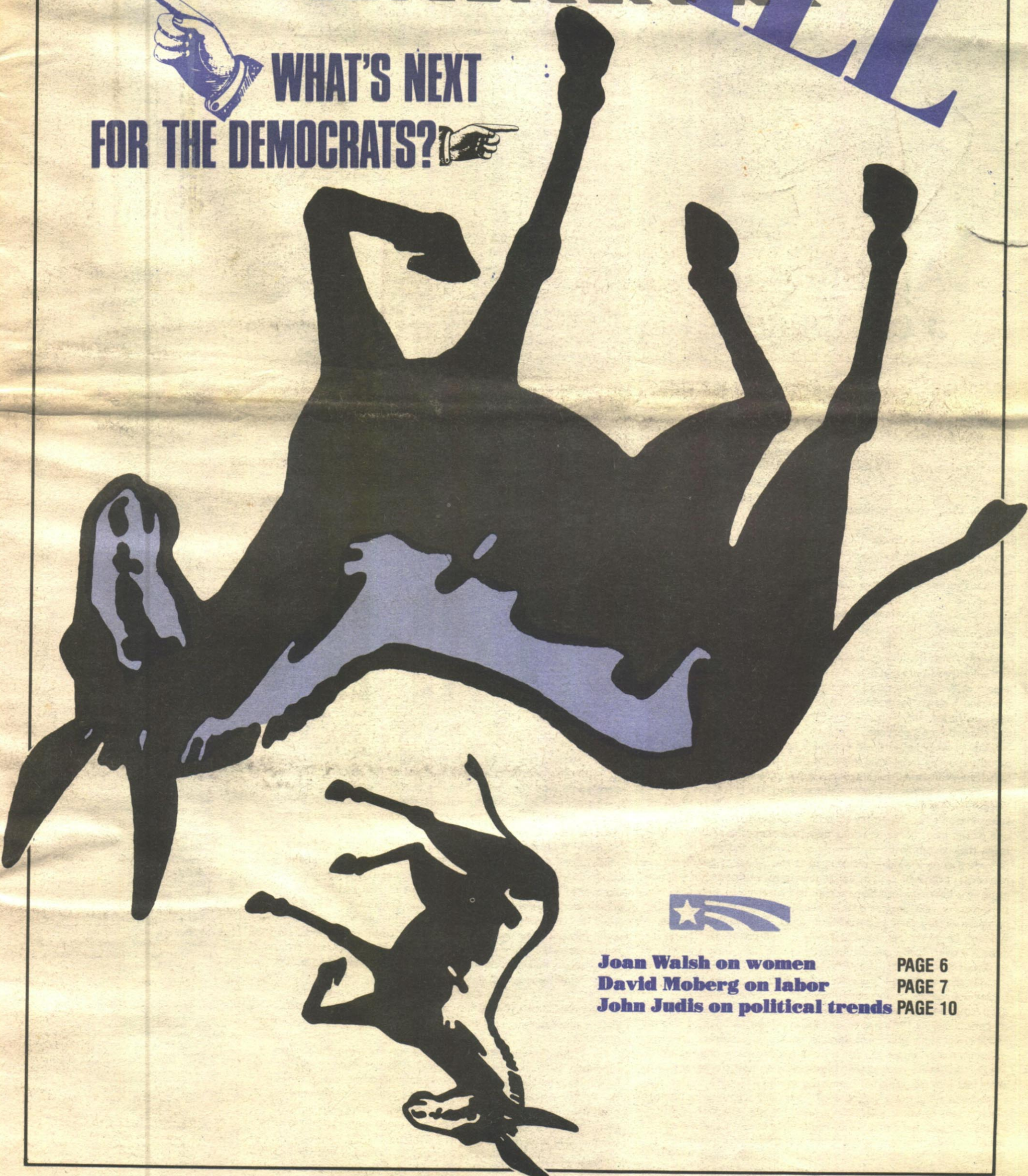
## AFTER THE



# FALL



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FOR THE DEMOCRATS?**



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Holly Payne

## Anatomy of a campaign

By Rachel Gorlin

NEW YORK

On first glance it may seem strange that self-styled "independent" Democrat Bob Mrazek was ever elected to Congress from New York's Third District. Stretching along Long Island's North Shore from the New York City border out about 35 miles to Suffolk County, the district ranks sixth out of 435 in the U.S. in per capita household income, according to the last census.

But in 1982, county legislator Bob Mrazek, 36, convinced the voters of the Third District that their freshman Congressman, John LeBoutillier, an heir to the Vanderbilt fortune, had become an embarrassment. The author of a right-wing attack on Harvard and a bizarre spy thriller, 31-year-old LeBoutillier had publicly insulted political figures ranging from Ronald Reagan to House Majority Leader Tip O'Neill, and voters apparently thought LeBoutillier's conservative politics were too extreme. Mrazek was elected to Congress with 51.8 percent of the vote.

But that was 1982. By 1984 the political climate had changed markedly. High Republican enrollment, Mrazek's narrow victory in 1982, Reagan's personal popularity and the positively perceived impact of Reaganomics on Long Island all made the incumbent freshman a target for a strong challenge. In 1982 Reagan's approval rating was 40 percent in Mrazek's polls; by May 1984 it had climbed to 69 percent.

Before I went to work on Mrazek's re-election campaign six months ago, my most vivid image of the Third Congressional District was from Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. After Cary Grant is kidnapped by mistake at the Plaza Hotel in New York, he is bundled off to the Glen Cove mansion. Once there, James Mason's henchmen try to do in the bewildered Grant. In one of the most nerve-wracking car-chase scenes ever filmed, they force their victim to down a bottle of bourbon and send him careening along a winding shore road at the wheel of a stolen Mercedes. I thought of that car sequence several times on election night as it became clear that Mrazek had survived by only the slenderest margin, smaller both in percentage and total votes than his upset victory over LeBoutillier in 1982. The whole campaign suddenly began to feel like a narrowly missed car accident: only after it's over do the people involved realize how close they came to disaster.

I was sent to Mrazek's district in late May as part of an effort by several political action committees to get their members involved in key House races all over the country. Mrazek's defeat of LeBoutillier in 1982 had made him an instant favorite of Capitol Hill liberals. In his first term, Mrazek generally established an exemplary environmental, military and social-issue voting record. He did, however, vote against large-ticket domestic programs like the 1983 Jobs Bill program supported by the AFL-CIO, which helped him avoid being tagged as a "liberal big-spender" at home.

I was sent to work with NOW, the National Abortion Rights Action League, the Sierra Club, Freeze Voter and Citizen Action, which all have members in the Third Congressional District. Theoretically, my job was to make sure that their issues were given some visibility at the same time they helped Mrazek get re-

Bob Mrazek is uncomfortable with ideological politics, calling himself an "independent" Democrat.

elected. In Washington, when I spoke with NARAL Political Action Director Marie Bass and agreed to take on the job, it sounded like a great plan. But back in the district, as I quickly discovered, many of the groups didn't have Mrazek at the top of their agenda. New York state NOW's political action committee, for example, was upset that Mrazek hadn't co-sponsored the Weiss-Waxman gay rights bill in Congress. Great Neck's SANE chapter was furious that their Congressman had supported California liberal George Miller's "line item veto" bill, which they, for reasons obscure even to national SANE, vehemently opposed. Some abortion rights activists were angry that Mrazek hadn't co-sponsored the Fazio-Green reproductive rights bill.

I also soon realized that the Mrazek staffer who'd made the quip about not wanting any "Revolutionary Socialists for Mrazek" T-shirts around was only half kidding. Though poll results indicated that the nuclear freeze, the ERA, a pro-choice position on abortion and opposition to wasteful defense spending were popular in the district, so was President Reagan—overwhelmingly.

For that reason, Republicans apparently believed the only necessary ingredient of a victory in the district in 1984 was money. Like LeBoutillier, who had doled out his own money to defeat then-incumbent Lester Wolff in 1980, Mrazek's opponent had to be willing to spend hundreds of thousands of his own dollars to get his message to the voters. Enter 48-year-old retired Solomon Brothers partner Robert Quinn, who decided to run in June. With no history of political activity (he wasn't a registered Republican until 1980) or record of community involvement, Quinn's credibility as a candidate came from three sources: his support of President Reagan, his experience as a businessman and his willingness to spend whatever it might take to win.

Once Quinn entered the race Mrazek realized that to get re-elected he would have to run on his largely anti-Reagan record, but with distance from the national Democratic ticket and most anti-Reagan invective. Mrazek became an opponent of the Vietnam war after the loss of an eye in a 1967 officers' training school accident landed him in a VA hospital for three months, where he began to understand what was really going on in Southeast Asia. He had worked for anti-war Sen. Vance Hartke for several years and had beaten one of the most notorious and detested young right-wingers in the House. But he cannot be classified as a "movement person." He is uncomfortable with the politics of ideology, proudly considering himself an "independent" Democrat.

Just as I came to see that many of the issue activists I was dealing with had at best a passable grasp of how to get a Congressman elected, I realized that Mrazek and most of the campaign staff didn't really understand, say, a NARAL or a Sierra Club member's primary commitment to his or her group's issue. In a race that was perceived as tight and exciting, those differences might not have surfaced as divisively. But right up to election day I kept hearing: "Bob isn't in any trouble." Despite the fact that Quinn had pledged to spend at least \$750,000, press coverage made Mrazek sound home free. These pronouncements hurt volunteer recruitment among the issue groups, who generally ended up devoting their time to Mondale's quixotic campaign in the district.

Originally, the main project to involve issue group members was an ambitious door-to-door canvass. Designed by staffers of the New York Community Action Network (the New York branch of

## THE STORY INSIDER

Citizen Action) in concert with the campaign, the canvass reached 10,000 households in crucial swing areas of the district. The voters were asked who they were planning to vote for for Congress and were then queried about the national issue that was most important to them this year. (The issue identification was used to send a personalized, follow-up letter.)

Knocking on the assigned 75 doors took a good four hours, which, along with the training in how to canvass, required the commitment of the better part of a weekend. The campaign discovered quickly that it was dangerous to rely on the issue groups alone to recruit for the canvass. Great Neck SANE cancelled its canvass commitment at the last minute after deciding that if the Mrazek campaign didn't want them to include Mondale in the canvass message, they wouldn't participate at all. Still, the canvass was an important success in an election won by less than 6,000 votes. Some issue group members were among the Mrazek campaign's most valuable volunteers. The SANE professional canvass introduced several thousand third congressional district voters interested in arms control to Mrazek's exemplary record in that area.

For all his money, Republican Quinn was far from the perfect candidate. Early in the campaign Mrazek forces discovered that Quinn hadn't voted for four years (and voted only seven times in the last 20 years). Apparently, his public speaking experience had been minimal. His debate performances were poor—so poor, in fact, that he cancelled most of them rather than expose himself to the public in a format he couldn't control. His TV commercials, radio ads and mailings hammered away at Mrazek's lack of support

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By Diana Johnstone

## BRUSSELS

**T**HE VATICAN'S CURRENT INQUISITION against liberation theology is regarded in Europe as a power struggle between interests rather than a quarrel over ideas.

It is seen as the latest phase in a relentless campaign against the Latin American, and especially the Brazilian, "church of the poor," and is perceived as a threat to existing social hierarchies. The campaign to discredit liberation theology was launched in the early '70s with support from the rich West German Catholic Church and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

European Catholics are bitterly divided over this conflict, which in many points resembles (not accidentally) the 14th century conflict portrayed in Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*. Especially in Belgium and West Germany, priests, missionaries and theologians—sometimes from the same religious orders and universities—confront each other in the front lines.

The Inquisition is being led by the Cardinal Archbishop of Munich, Joseph Ratzinger, who was put in charge of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in November 1981 in order to crack down on liberation theology. When Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff was called in for questioning in September, he greeted his Inquisitor with the Bavarian "Gruss Gott!" and then defended his ideas in German, since he studied theology in Munich. Meanwhile, in West Germany, thousands of German Catholics demonstrated in protest under the banner, "Despite the Inquisition, Liberation Theology Lives, Herr Ratzinger!"

A Belgian priest explains that the "sorcerer" behind the whole campaign against liberation theology is Belgian Jesuit Roger Vekemans, whose CIA connections were exposed by the *Washington Star* and the *National Catholic Reporter* in the mid-'70s. At that time Vekemans had boasted to a fellow Jesuit of the millions of dollars he had gotten from the CIA and from Agency for International Development (AID). He had also bragged of having given CIA Director John McCone this clever idea: let a couple of small Latin American countries go Communist and it will then be easier to work up anti-Communism in the rest of the hemisphere.

Born in 1920, Vekemans studied at Louvain University in Belgium before going to South America in 1957 to fight Marxism and defend the interests of the rich.

Father Joseph Comblin was born in Brussels in 1923 and studied at Louvain before going to South America in 1958 to minister to the needs of the poor. That was shortly before an event that he calls "the awakening." "The modern history of Latin America begins with the Cuban Revolution in 1959," he has said. "Then everything changed. The aspiration to independence, the hope."

Comblin worked for many years in the diocese of Dom Helder Camara in Recife in northeastern Brazil. The poverty, the social injustice, the brutality of the rich to the poor and disinherited are unimaginable in Europe. In 1970 Comblin published one of the first books on liberation theology, and in 1972 he was expelled by the military dictatorship.

He has been able to go back to Brazil to share the "new hope" of the '80s. Interviewed in Louvain, where he is teaching the fall term before returning to Recife, he spoke of the "new hope" he felt in Brazil this year, which he said is expressed in the huge demonstrations for free elections.

This hope has been sustained by the extraordinary Brazilian Catholic Church, with its 150,000 self-managed parishes of poor people called "church base communities." Guerrilla revolt has been defeated, so orthodox Communists, cut off from the masses, cling for dear life to the "national bourgeoisie"—the local industrialists fighting an uneven battle against



The current assault is being led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Archbishop of Munich.

## New Inquisition on liberation theology

the multinationals and the big state monopolies that control energy resources and exploit whole regions.

For the poor masses, the hope is the Christian left. Its main political expression is the Workers Party (PT) of "Lula." Naturally, the ruling oligarchies want to extinguish this hope.

And the Vatican? "It isn't that the Vatican is unanimous," says Comblin. "But there is certainly a strong tendency hostile to the Brazilian Bishops Conference and its positions."

This is partly because ever since the Middle Ages, the Vatican has not wanted to let any church move so far ahead that it could become a competing center of inspiration, and the Brazilian church has been moving fast. "It's a long story," he said.

### The roots of discontent.

In a way, it all began with the Vatican—with Pope John XXIII and the Vatican Council II that decided the Church's "option for the poor." The Council Church was in harmony with the progressive church leaders who founded the Latin American Bishops Council (CELAM) in 1956. CELAM's 1968 conference in Medellin was devoted to putting Vatican II into practice.

On Brazilian soil, the "church of the poor" grew like a tropical plant. Boff has tried to explain to Ratzinger that this happened, first of all, for pastoral reasons. The Brazilian church is desperately short of priests—1.3 priests per 10,000 faithful. The Brazilian people are religious, and the Catholic church faces competition from numerous sects, oriental religions, fast-growing Afro-Brazilian religions and, most recently, new churches that have been sent from the U.S. with the blessings of Reagan's administration.

To meet this "frightening pastoral challenge," the church must show "courage and creativity," Boff told Ratzinger. The Brazilian church has found the solution in the base communities where "the people read the word of God, celebrate, put into practice love of neighbor...." All this activity is supported by the Brazilian bishops.

As has happened in other times and places, when the people read the Bible, they find meanings related to their own lives. The liberation theologians have harmonized these fresh popular interpretations with theological tradition.

In 1968 Medellin looked like the beginning of a new church. But it frightened the privileged and touched off the reaction that led straight to today's Inquisition.

The course of reaction is inseparable

from the skyrocketing career of Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, a 49-year-old Colombian who reminds some European clerics today of "the Borgias during the Renaissance." There are few such extreme examples, says Comblin, of a bishop with a political mentality that conceives everything in terms of friends and enemies.

In the late '60s Lopez was a fashionable cocktail-party priest who helped organize a country club reception for visiting U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. His family belongs to the technocratic modernizing branch of the upper class, and his brother was a cabinet minister. Lopez studied in Rome, doing his thesis on Marxism. Against the church of the poor, he has always represented the church of the rich.

On March 25, 1971, when he was in his mid-30s, Lopez was consecrated Bishop of Medellin as police held back a crowd protesting, "He is not worthy!"

This was the same year that Roger Vekemans published in Barcelona the first book attacking liberation theology. It was also the year that AID wanted to find out what the high-living Vekemans had done with \$400,000 it gave him but was told by the U.S. ambassador to Chile that an investigation could hurt Chilean Christian Democrats. (This exchange was later discovered by a journalist using the Freedom of Information Act).

In May 1972, Vekemans and Lopez visited Roman congregations together to gain support for their forthcoming campaign. Lopez' main protector in the Rome Curia was to be the influential Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio, until recently head of the Latin American commission. In mid-1972, accusations of "Marxist infiltration" in CELAM found their way into the press. This was the softening-up process preparing for the coup of the 14th assembly of CELAM in Sucre, Bolivia, in November 1972. After nine days of secret debates, Lopez emerged as the new secretary general. CELAM was turned around.

In 1973, the influential Bishop of Essen, Franz Hengsbach, flew to Bogota to form the Study Circle "Church and Liberation," along with Lopez. Hengsbach's influence was material as well as moral, since he was president of the foreign missions commission of the German Bishops Conference and thus responsible for the Catholic funds Misereor, for development, and Adveniat, for pastoral work in poorer countries. The Latin American churches are poor. The West German Catholic Church had an income of more than 4.8 billion Deutsche marks (about \$2 billion) from taxes alone in 1982. Ad-

veniat dispenses about 100 million marks annually.

In the new study circle, Lopez developed his argument that there are opposing liberation theologies—a genuinely Latin American spiritual conception of liberation, opposed to a political conception imported from Europe and tainted with Marxism. Latin Americans on both sides of the dispute tend to accuse the other side of being "European." And both are right, in a way.

Comblin says that the real difference among liberation theologians is that those who studied in France were influenced by French social concerns, while those who studied in Germany were more influenced by the intellectual tradition of German theology.

To furbish ideological arms against the church of the poor, Vekemans founded an institute in Bogota, CEDIA (Center of Study for Development and Integration of Latin America). He also founded a review, *Tierra Nueva*, in Bogota in collaboration with Lopez to combat liberation theology.

The Lopez-Hengsbach study circle of a score of theologians, psychologists and Bible scholars met several times in Germany to prepare an important German-financed colloquium held in Rome March 2-6, 1976. Targets were "Christians for Socialism" and liberation theology, which Vekemans denounced as a "contagious virus" in a paper to the collo-

**Says one priest, "It's a method that casts suspicion on everyone. All of liberation theology is put on the defensive."**

quium. The colloquium then worked up the arguments currently employed by Ratzinger.

Hengsbach's point is that Christian liberation must be from sin, original and personal, and not from social structures. After being decorated with the Order of the Condor of the Andes by Bolivian dictator Banzer, Hengsbach returned from his fifth trip to Latin America and told the Catholic news agency KNA in Essen on May 13, 1977: "The so-called liberation theology leads to nothing. Its consequence is Communism." This touched off a vigorous protest among West German Protestant and Catholic theologians. Objections were raised to German church financing of the campaign against liberation theology.

Hildegard Luning, who for a long time worked for Bishop Hengsbach and Ad-

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## The bishop's move

In his first 10 months as archbishop of New York, John O'Connor has managed to offend plenty of people with his vocal conservative politics, especially those supportive of reproductive choice and gay rights. So when he was asked by the John M. Olin Center of the University of Chicago to speak on the relationship of religion and politics, protesters and media were poised for his next onslaught. O'Connor failed to deliver, however. With his election damage done and fellow prelate Cardinal Joseph Bernardin—who has recently called him to task for his single-issue politics—in the front row, the usually fiery New Yorker gave a bland lecture on the nuts and bolts of drawing up the two-year-old bishops' pastoral on war and peace. The newly careful O'Connor assiduously noted during the lecture that his comments were only "personal and speculative and do not carry the authority of a church teaching." He did get one dig in, however: he quoted the only section on abortion in the pastoral before being whisked off campus.

But protesters—including the campus Gay and Lesbian Alliance and the Women's Union—had done their homework. They found that the sponsor of the lecture, the Olin Center, gets its money from the Olin Corporation—a defense contractor that had \$74.1 million in sales last year, mostly in ammunition and, reportedly, for fuel for the cruise missile. Said UofC Catholic Len Klekner: "O'Connor stirringly told his audience that the 'arms race robs the poor,' but neglected to tell them that he was speaking under the auspices of a weapons manufacturer." In *These Times* later learned that former Treasury Secretary William Simon, who heads the conservative lay Catholics' commission that countered the bishops' recent economic pastoral, receives money more regularly from Olin as a president of one of its subsidiaries, the John M. Olin Foundation.

## Six of one...

Vanessa Redgrave's breach of contract and civil rights suit against the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) ended last week with a mixed verdict that leaves both sides claiming victory, reports Thomas Kiely. Redgrave was hired by the BSO in March of 1982 to narrate six performances of Stravinsky's opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex*. The hiring drew immediate protest from members of Boston's Jewish community and others opposed to the British actress for her active support of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The BSO promptly cancelled the series, citing "causes and circumstances beyond the orchestra's reasonable control." The jury awarded Redgrave \$100,000 for the breach of contract and consequential damage to her career, but dismissed her claim that the series was cancelled for political reasons—a violation of her civil rights. While Redgrave was delighted by the verdict—claiming a victory for artists' contracts—the BSO as well as Redgrave critics applauded the dismissal of her civil rights claim. It was not a political case, they argued, and had nothing to do with black-listing. But John Reinstein, a staff attorney for the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union, disagrees. "As far as the performer is concerned," he told the *Boston Globe*, "what difference does it make if an orchestra says 'we don't like your political views and we're cancelling' or 'our contributors don't like your political views and are cancelling'?"

## Through a glass darkly

One referendum slated for the ballot in Arkansas didn't make it due to the vigilance of the Arkansas Women's Political Caucus (AWPC) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The "Unborn Child" amendment would have prohibited the use of state funds for abortions and would have declared that the state's priority is to protect the "health, safety and welfare of the unborn child from conception until birth." According to Sandra Kurjiaka, executive director of the Arkansas ACLU, if the amendment had passed, it would have curtailed the use of the morning-after pill in hospitals and possibly would have affected the use of matching Medicare funds for hospital abortions. And sooner or later the anti-abortion groups would have gone after private clinics and doctors who perform abortions, since the Arkansas voters would have legislated the point when life begins.

Although the pro-amendment groups were well organized and well funded, the ACLU and the AWPC found a snag in their referendum and challenged it in the Arkansas Supreme Court. According to Arkansas law, referendum titles that are deceptive, dishonest or biased can be thrown off the ballot. In late October, the Arkansas Supreme Court determined that the title was biased because of its assumption that life begins at conception. The court also ruled that the name was misleading because it didn't give the voters a fair idea of the main intent of the referendum—to limit a woman's right to an abortion. Kujiaka was heartened by the court's finding, but not complacently so: "The right-wingers have already geared up to resubmit an 'Abortion Restriction Amendment' for 1986—but we also have two years to organize and fight them. And the next time around the true issues will be out before the public."

—Beth Maschinot



## Studds shows voters how a left agenda works

NEW BEDFORD, MA—Congress' only open gay won re-election easily on November 6 with much of his margin coming from socially conservative Catholic and working-class voters in and around New Bedford, Mass.

Gerry Studds has represented the Tenth Congressional District, comprising New Bedford, Cape Cod and the islands and the suburbs on Boston's South Shore since 1972, when he wrested the seat from a Republican incumbent in his second try for Congress. An urbane Yale alumnus, Studds' political roots were in the anti-war and "new politics" movements of the late '60s and early '70s. After his 1970 defeat, he immersed himself in the problems of the blue-collar sections of his district and learned Portuguese to communicate better with the large immigrant population around New Bedford.

Despite Republican and conservative strength in parts of the district, Studds seemed immune to challenge until the summer of 1983. The House of Representatives then censured Studds for a sexual affair he had 11 years earlier with a 17-year-old male con-

gressional page. Admitting a serious error in judgment, Studds also declared his homosexuality. A safe seat seemed no longer safe, and Studds faced opposition in both the primary and general election.

Conservative Democrat Peter Flynn, a close ally of former Gov. Ed King, ran a crude, one-issue campaign in the primary.

In one candidates' forum, when asked a question about the Reagan tax cuts, Flynn chose to address "the issue on everyone's mind"—the censure. Repeatedly attacking Studds as a "child molester," Flynn managed to reinforce the impression many Studds supporters had formed that their Congressman was being persecuted for a mistake 11 years in the past. By the end of the primary campaign, Flynn was being booed at public meetings, especially around Studds' stronghold in New Bedford. Studds survived the primary challenge.

In the general election, Studds faced a more serious opponent, Lewis Crampton, a moderate Republican with credentials as an environmentalist (an important

Studds won handily despite Senate censure last year.

issue to middle-class voters and to the large numbers of people employed in the fishing industry). Although his staff traveled a short distance on Flynn's low road, Crampton chose the high road of raising the censure only insofar as it hampered Studds' effectiveness as representative for the district. Gambling on Reagan's popularity, Crampton made a larger issue of Studds' outspoken liberalism and "Reagan bashing" which the challenger argued damaged the district by isolating its Congressman from influential people in the administration.

Studds responded by going on the offensive. In a series of debates, he eloquently attacked the unfairness of the Reagan tax cuts and the inequities of the federal tax structure, argued for more jobs, better environmental protection and major cuts in the defense budget. He challenged Crampton to explain how low-income New Bedford residents had benefited from Reaganomics. He also defended his own involvement in efforts like the city of New Bedford's exploration of seizure by eminent domain of a Gulf and Western machine tool plant that was suffering from corporate disinvestment. Crampton had made that an issue by claiming that Studds' anti-business stance would hurt economic growth in the district. As Studds pointed out from the stage, the public pressure on Gulf and Western had worked—the plant was sold, and the United Electrical Workers members are still working.

In his 12 years in Congress, Studds has worked hard at constituent service, at listening to the people in his district, at mastering details of issues important to the cities and towns of the Tenth Congressional District, issues like fishing, Coast Guard funding and the environment. That kind of constituent service meant a lot in his effort to win re-election.

Studds has also eloquently argued the case for a left-liberal Democratic program, explained that program clearly and related it to his constituents' needs. On election night in New Bedford, many of his trade union backers were wishing that the national Democratic ticket had spoken as clearly.

—Jack Clark

## BCA takes Berkeley

BERKELEY, CA—In an unprecedented upset for the left, Berkeley Citizens Action's (BCA) candidates won every city-wide contest—all four of the contested city council seats, both school board positions, the district seat on the regional transportation board and all six local ballot measures. The victory gave BCA its first majority on the city council (by an 8-1 margin) and all five school board seats.

The November 6 results were the most resounding victory this city has seen since anti-Vietnam war activists organized and took their politics into local elections

20 years ago. This feat was accomplished against well-financed incumbents, who ran a last-minute smear campaign that included everything from red-baiting to allegations of consorting with prostitutes.

The campaign offered a remarkable contrast in style and substance. BCA ran on its grassroots base. For campaign workers, it drew heavily from a variety of constituencies—Third World, labor, neighborhoods, environmentalists, students, seniors and community service agencies. At its nominating convention, the organization adopted a 49-page platform that covered everything from city street maintenance to non-intervention in Central America.

The convention itself was a raucous affair of 600 community

leaders who, after three ballots and eight hours of debate, nominated four candidates that represented the broadness of the left coalition: Maudelle Shirek, a 74-year-old black woman who was a senior center director and union leader; Nancy Skinner, a graduate student and environmentalist; Don Jelinek, a civil rights lawyer who had defended Martin Luther King Jr. in the South; and Ann Chandler, county laboratory director and health care activist.

On the other side of town, a more genteel gathering of 50 self-described "moderate" Democrats and Republicans—the All-Berkeley Coalition (ABC) renominated their three incumbents and later added a university business professor to the ticket. While the BCA campaign was a



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low-cost, made-in-Berkeley product, the ABC "moderates" recruited San Francisco's slick, high-priced conservative political consultant Don Solem.

The ABC also relied on a campaign characterized by a stream of targeted direct mail and smear hit pieces. In big red letters, their mailings warned that the "extremists" needed only one more city council seat to gain a majority. In another hit piece, they warned that BCA favored negotiating with street prostitutes rather than running them out of the neighborhoods with ABC-backed vigilante patrols.

Probably the campaign's crudest hit piece was directed at Rep. Ron Dellums, BCA's leading supporter. A brochure entitled "Meet Ron Dellums and Friends," featuring Fidel Castro, Mummar Qaddafi, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Yassar Arafat and Konstantin Chernenko was targeted to certain neighborhoods.

Against this backdrop, BCA ran an issue-oriented campaign that focused on protecting rent control, keeping the city's com-

prehensive community agency-based recycling program, protecting workers' rights and controlling development that threatened neighborhoods and the city's bay front recreation area.

The BCA also gathered a number of labor endorsements, including the powerful Alameda County AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. The ABC administration had a history of opposing city worker unions, including attempts to take back worker benefits in contract negotiations, overturning a critical arbitrator's grievance ruling, illegally firing the president of the union and firing council candidate Shirek, claiming she was too old to supervise a city senior center.

BCA took these issues to the streets. To counteract the hit piece direct mailings, hundreds of volunteers walked precincts, dropped literature and phoned voters. As newly elected Councilmember Nancy Skinner observed, "We won because we were in the streets. We ran a grassroots campaign—upbeat and based on issues." —Mike Berkowitz

## New rules for needy traders

WASHINGTON—A change in U.S. trade laws may make some developing countries think twice about denying their workers full labor rights. When the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), a decade-old program giving duty-free treatment to Third World exports, came up for renewal this year, Congress extended it for eight-and-a-half years and added a provision linking tariff breaks with respect for "internationally recognized worker rights." GSP beneficiaries that violate labor rights, such as South Korea, Chile and Brazil, may now be excluded from program participation under legislation approved by the president.

Nearly 3,000 products from 140 developing countries enter duty-free, adding up to \$10.8 billion of imports in 1983. "Import sensitive" products—textiles, apparel, shoes and electronic goods—are ineligible, and Communist countries and OPEC members cannot participate. The president must use certain criteria to designate a country as a beneficiary, including whether or not it aids terrorists or fails to help the U.S. in stopping illegal drug traffic. Congress added worker rights to the mandatory criteria, and ordered the president to submit yearly reports on the status of these rights in each designated country.

The new guidelines, originally included in legislation introduced by Rep. Donald Pease (D-OH), "begins the process of recognizing in U.S. law that international labor rights are an important part of human rights," says Pharis Harvey, executive director of the North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea. South Korea, which received the second largest amount of GSP benefits in 1982 (\$1.1 billion, second only to Taiwan), could stand to lose the most. It is one of the worst abusers of labor rights among GSP beneficiaries.

Since changing its labor laws four years ago, South Korea has

abolished every independent union, purged 300 labor leaders, jailed and blacklisted striking workers and suppressed all forms of mass protest. Last September 19, thousands of students and workers marched in Seoul in support of the Cheonggae District Garment Workers Union, which recently began to reorganize after being outlawed in 1981. While some of the 150 arrested by security officials were given 30-day sentences, the fate of many is uncertain. Amnesty International has documented past beatings and torture of union activists charged with "anti-state" crimes, and sentences anywhere from two years to life imprisonment are commonplace.

While the GSP was originally devised to provide greater access to the U.S. market for the entire Third World, one-half of the benefits in 1982 went to only three countries—Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong. The original Pease legislation excluded a country from participation as its per capita GNP rose. The bill passed by Congress, however, removes countries at a slower pace. As a result, preferences will continue going to countries that need them the least. AFL-CIO spokesman Stephen Koplan points out that in 1982 the top three beneficiaries sold a total of \$21 billion worth of goods to the U.S., of which \$4 billion was duty-free.

The real victory with GSP renewal came with acceptance of the labor rights provision. Pressure can now be put on the administration to bar certain exports from non-union regimes or prevent countries from being designated. "The battle is now political," says Pharis Harvey, urging church, labor and human rights groups to take the initiative in seeking denial of duty-free benefits. Each year, interested parties petition the U.S. trade representative, the president's chief trade negotiator, to change country and product designation. Given the administration's record on human rights, many agree that it will be an uphill fight. At best, the petitioning process will provide a forum to call greater attention to labor abuses overseas.

—Alexis Gillespie

EDGE OF RESISTANCE

invades, bombs, send combat troops, or otherwise significantly escalates its intervention in Nicaragua or El Salvador, I PLEDGE TO JOIN WITH OTHERS TO ENGAGE IN ACTS OF NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION AT U.S. FEDERAL FACILITIES, INCLUDING U.S. FEDERAL BUILDINGS, MILITARY INSTALLATIONS, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES, OFFICES OF THE CIA, THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER APPROPRIATE PLACES. I PLEDGE TO ENGAGE IN NONVIOLENT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE TO PREVENT OR HALT THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION WHICH SUCH MILITARY ACTION WOULD CAUSE FOR THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA WHO HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED SO MUCH.

THE PLEDGE OF RESISTANCE

Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Group Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_

## Briefing: What to do in case of an escalation

With President Reagan taking the focus off the Nicaraguan elections and placing it on the phantom shipment of MiGs, Nicaragua is readying itself for a full-scale invasion. At the same time, a broad, loosely-organized coalition of religious, Central American and peace groups in the U.S. are racing to organize a network to prevent an escalation of the conflict or to physically resist in the face of it.

Tens of thousands of Americans have signed a "pledge of resistance" in the past four months. They will be "on call" in the event of a major escalation in Nicaragua, having vowed to take a regular shift camping out at congressional offices, military bases, offices of the CIA or the White House.

The pledge, first published in *Sojourners* magazine in August, has been reproduced by thousands of local groups across the country and distributed at rallies, meetings and through newsletters. Dennis Marker of *Sojourners* says the distribution rate has been "phenomenal" and often so decentralized that representatives of groups walk unannounced into his Washington office to inform him that they've "signed up hundreds of people last month." Marker adds that though there's not one central list of groups that are involved at a local level, regional contacts are being coordinated to handle the burgeoning numbers and to be conduits through which information about the conflict can flow.

The idea for a major call for nonviolent civil disobedience germinated at a religious retreat

in November last year, in the wake of the Grenada invasion and increasing pleas for assistance to stop intervention from Nicaraguan church groups. The sponsoring religious groups—including *Sojourners*, Witness for Peace and the Inter-religious Task Force on Central America—quickly found more than a dozen other national groups willing to work on the idea of massive resistance. These include groups traditionally concerned with nuclear arms issues—SANE, the Mobilization for Survival—as well as those groups whose activity has always focused on Central America, including the National Lawyers Guild Central American Task Force, the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador and the American Friends Service Committee. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Pax Christi and various denominational groups have also joined the effort.

Last week a core committee met in Washington to decide what stages of U.S. escalation will warrant a full-scale mobilization of resisters. A naval blockade, reportedly much discussed at the State Department, would trigger full implementation of the plan, along with the more aggressive tactic of U.S. troop deployment, an air strike or massive bombing. Two other possibilities that would set the stage for war—withdrawing diplomatic recognition from the Sandinistas and giving it to the *contras* and placing travel restrictions on U.S. citizens—would also set off a chain of action starting with a core signal committee through regional representatives to local groups and their hundreds who

have signed the pledge.

In the event of a signal, the pledge signers will be asked to go to a previously designated church or meeting place and then will be sent with others to government buildings to demand a halt of the escalation. Yvonne Dilling of Witness for Peace says that many of the signers are nurses, teachers, housewives, factory workers—people who "call and say they've never done anything like this before, but that it's time to do more than write letters."

Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* emphasizes that the purpose of the contingency plan is to thwart an invasion, not to stop it once it has begun. Working along these lines, the coalition has sent letters to members of Congress, the State Department and the president informing them that resistance to an invasion would be strong. They've also designated Central American week, December 2 through 8, as a "preview" week. Representatives from local groups will gather at local congressional offices to present their collection of pledges, the volume of which will hopefully set the Congresspeople into more intensive lobbying against the president's antagonistic posture toward Nicaragua.

While the coalition gathers signatures and prepares a structure for communication, the National Lawyers Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights are following up on the legal avenues to force Reagan to call off the covert war in Nicaragua. According to Ellen Yaroshefky of the NLG, the next step in a long line of lobbying and litigation is to pressure the Sub-committee on the Western Hemisphere to look into the legality of Reagan's moves in Nicaragua when it reconvenes in January.

So far, the Guild's lawsuits against the State Department regarding Nicaragua have been blocked or are in appeal. In the *Dellums v. Smith* case, with Rep. Ron Dellums taking on the attorney general for violating the Neutrality Act by funding the *contras*, the court decided in June that the act applied only to private citizens. Which of course causes Yaroshefky and others to ask why the U.S. government allows paramilitary troops to train in this country. The case of *Sanchez-Espinoza v. Smith*, concerning (among other claims) the violation of Congress' right to declare war, is still in appeal.

While Yaroshefky sees the legal challenges as important for unmasking the lawlessness of Reagan's actions in Nicaragua, she also believes that the "final rein on Reagan's policy" will be found in political organizing, not in court cases. The NLG joins with the Pledge of Resistance coalition groups in encouraging people to sign a pledge. This can be done through local religious, peace or Central American groups or by contacting the Inter-religious Task Force on Central America, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115. (212) 870-3383.

—Beth Maschinot



## WOMEN

# How Reagan bridged the gender gap

By Joan Walsh

**A**S THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY searches for a route back to national political respectability, the task for women inside the party and on its margins is keeping the leadership—and the electorate—from drawing the wrong conclusion from Ronald Reagan's 1984 landslide.

It's a mission born of more than a little self-interest. Male Democratic leaders from Illinois to Mississippi were quick to blame Mondale's drubbing on the public perception that the party is run by the likes of National Organization for Women (NOW) President Judy Goldsmith and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. The scapegoating is likely to continue as the Democrats look for a way to lose the special interest label it wore so uncomfortably this year.

There's no way to read the presidential election as a referendum on feminism and Geraldine Ferraro, or the politics of military restraint, social responsibility and civil rights that came to be associated with the gender gap. But the outcome, especially the fact that a majority of women joined men in supporting Reagan, has raised the question of whether there is a "women's vote." The answer from feminist leaders and political analysts is a somewhat tentative yes.

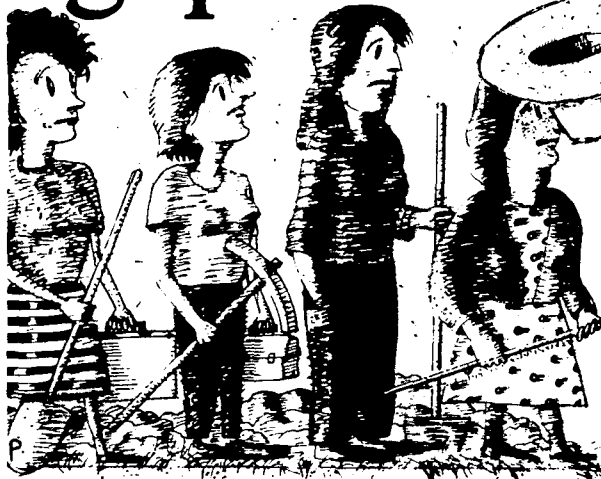
In post-election analysis Democratic women, like the party itself, were eliminating the negative—Reagan's victory—by accentuating the positive: Democratic gains in the Senate and a respectable showing in the House.

The women's vote in congressional races wasn't as overwhelmingly Democratic as in 1982, when women favored Democrats by margins of up to 20 percent. But it was notable. "In the Senate races, you see the same old sex differences showing up as in '82," says CBS News survey director Kathleen Frankovic. Women are credited with winning Senate seats for Illinois' Paul Simon and Massachusetts' John Kerry (there the gender gap was 13 percent), even though women in those states went marginally for Reagan. Smaller but significant gender gaps were notable in Tom Harkin's support in Iowa and Albert Gore's in Tennessee, as well as in Madeleine Kunin's successful race for governor of Vermont.

So women, like other Democratic groups, tended to split their ticket, for many of the same reasons. "You had a landslide election, a referendum on the economy and keeping things as they are," says Frankovic. "And you still wound up with a difference between men and women."

Democratic National Committee (DNC) political director Ann Lewis echoes Frankovic. "Women voters live in the same political climate as everyone. And this year the political weather was determined by the success of the Reagan campaign."

**"For a few years, some women left the Republican Party, and this year they went home."**



## Wasted potential.

There's a fierce current of opinion that the Democrats squandered the potential of the women's vote. No one has argued that women could have made up Reagan's huge margin of victory. But women leaders do contend, somewhat convincingly, that the party's appeal to women had more symbolism than substance. Many agree with Eleanor Smeal, who worked as a consultant to the DNC, that the party "took the women's vote for granted."

Around the country women tell the same story—they waged voter registration and education campaigns with the party's blessing but without much support. The DNC's 31-state Women's Vote Task Forces had no budget. "What we did, we did ourselves," says Illinois Task Force chair Marilyn D. Clancy. "I don't think [the DNC] put resources into it, but I don't think they really had the resources."

Frustration emerged at a September strategy session, when local, state and national women leaders were invited to Washington to share their ideas about the women's vote and offer suggestions. Instead, they got a two-hour lecture by Mondale political advisor Paul Tully, after which they lined up to voice their criticisms to a defensive staff. In the end Bella Abzug advised other women to keep plugging away on their own projects because they would never see money or support from the party. Most had already reached that conclusion.

Dotty Lynch, Gary Hart's former poll-taker who later tried to advise the Mondale campaign, says Mondale strategists "felt the campaign was already too heavy on women's issues—they were very worried about the wimp factor. So you had virtually no paid ads on gender gap issues, or using Ferraro, and Mondale was out there taking hawkish stands on foreign policy."

Ferraro was finally cut loose to go after women voters at the close of the campaign. From the *Phil Donahue* show to small fundraising breakfasts across the country, she was able to tap the sense of excitement women had shared in the wake of her nomination—excitement that was dissipated both by the lackluster Mondale campaign and the stir over her finances. In California, where she spent most of the campaign's last week, women organizers credit her with widening the presidential gender gap to 10 points—California women voters split almost evenly between Mondale and Reagan.

"At first, we thought the Mondale people didn't understand how to use Ferraro or highlight the gender gap issues," says Lynch. "Then we came to realize they understood it, and had rejected it. That made people angry."

The final insult came with *Newsweek's* special campaign report, based on confidential memos released on the magazine's pledge not to print them until after the election. One scans its 80 pages for a treatment of the women's vote in vain,



though it is noted that Pat Caddell, worried about men drifting to Reagan, got Mondale to use more "consciously masculine imagery."

## Economic appeals.

It's hard to fault the Mondale campaign for not crafting a coherent appeal to women, since the effort lacked a coherent appeal to anyone, until the final weeks when the cause was already lost. Could it have been otherwise?

Maybe. Had Mondale advanced a compelling economic alternative he would have helped his cause with all voters, but especially women. The most powerful motivation behind women's voting independence in the last four years has been economic—the president's approval rating among women has risen parallel to their approval of his economic program.

Yet those for whom the recovery is tenuous or non-existent—especially single working women and mothers heading households—have remained skeptics. Various vote projects, from NOW to Human Serve, targeted those groups, but mobilizing them would have been easier with a clear alternative from the Democrats. In the windup, single working women resisted the Reagan tide, splitting their votes almost evenly between him and Mondale. Black women continued to out-vote black men and gave up to 95 percent to Mondale. And significantly, among union members, where the economic terms of the campaign were perhaps the clearest, there was a 10 percent gender gap, with more than 60 percent of union women voting for Mondale.

So while the gender gap didn't live up to its promise of uniting women across class lines, it still unites a sizeable bloc of women. "For a few years some women left the Republican Party, and this year they went home," says Elaine Zimmerman of California's Women's Economic Agenda Project. "The Republicans ac-

tually did a much better job with the women's vote than the Democrats. They studied the women they lost in 1980—homemakers and seniors especially—and won them back."

That makes talking about a women's vote a little more difficult, but still valid. The disappointing election results at least yielded a bounty of data for women's vote analysts and organizers. "We're going to have to look at demographics, break down the vote regionally and look at single heads of households," Zimmerman says. "We have to give up our generic, Campbell's soup appeal to women and target instead."

AFL-CIO Vice President Joyce Miller, a convenor of the Women's Roundtable that spawned the Women's Vote Project, agrees. She's lost some of her confidence about the notion of a women's vote. "I was one of the people saying to Mondale, 'Run with a woman, win with a woman'—but it didn't happen. The election showed me that women don't vote based on gender, but on economic and political issues."

Identifying and articulating those issues is the job of the women's movement. The perceived strength of the gender gap was what catapulted feminist leaders, from Judy Goldsmith to Ferraro, into political power and prominence this year. With the narrowing of the gap, feminists can be made to seem leaders without a constituency, just another special interest clamoring for a piece of the action. Their push for a woman vice president bolstered that image, and created the illusion that women had gotten what they wanted and should ask no more. At the Democratic convention, the disbanding of the women's caucus floor operation upon Ferraro's selection, which so angered black women delegates, only reinforced that message.

Clustered in lower-paying jobs, facing economic and social discrimination, more likely to fall into poverty than men, women do share certain interests. "Our polls showed there are clearly still differences between men's and women's opinions—about helping the poor, about the nuclear freeze, about troops in Central America," notes Frankovic.

It's clear that women's aversion to Reagan in 1980 and Republicans in 1982 was a reaction to a perception of extremism and crisis. Jimmy Carter's attempts to portray Reagan as a nuclear warmonger were much better received by women than men, explaining that year's eight-point gender gap. The 1982 elections came at the nadir of the Reagan recession, when the casualties of his economic program were clearly visible, and women responded.

If a second term unleashes a budget-slashing, saber-rattling Reagan, a large, cross-class gender gap will probably re-emerge. If not, the Democrats and liberal-left feminist leaders will have to work harder for women's support. For a party as adrift as the Democrats, the gender gap was always too good to be true. ■



## LABOR

# Unions are having difficulty fathoming what went wrong

By David Moberg

**I**N ONE OF THE PAINFUL MOMENTS of the past presidential campaign, Geraldine Ferraro confronted a group of auto workers in the Belvidere, Ill., Chrysler plant and asked with deep frustration why they were voting for Reagan. Indeed, it seemed that many blue-collar voters were calling for an encore by the aging actor. This, in turn, has led to a post-election conviction in some quarters that labor unions have not only shriveled in numbers—now representing only 17.9 percent of the labor force, down from 25.7 percent in 1970—but atrophied in political strength.

From the standpoint of what many of us think *ought* to be true, the labor movement did not do so well: at least 40 percent, maybe more, of its members voted for an anti-union president whose policies hurt many of them. But in the context of recent elections, labor didn't do so badly.

Many of labor's political experts are convinced that they delivered and were on the right course. That confidence may be a bulwark against predictable calls for the Democrats to move to the right, but it may also obscure the need for a more critical assessment of how—and what—labor is doing.

First, the figures. All three major network exit polls showed voters who had a union member in their household favoring Mondale over Reagan 53 percent to 47 or 45 percent. But in a telephone survey conducted by pollster Peter Hart for the AFL-CIO immediately after the election, the margin was 57 to 43 percent. CBS found that actual union members favored Mondale 57 to 41, and Vic Fingerhut, in a telephone poll for the AFL-CIO, found a margin of 59 to 41 (questioning only AFL-CIO members). That was virtually a reverse of the national vote.

Two comparisons are instructive. Union households favored Mondale by 17 to 19 percentage points more than non-union households, a 50 percent differential, according to NBC and ABC. "I regard that frankly as a fantastic performance," Fingerhut said. "The unions ran on traditional themes, and the Mondale campaign essentially gave no backing to what the unions were doing. The unions delivered their vote in the face of an incredibly stupid Mondale campaign."

Studies of past elections from the University of Michigan Survey Research Center show that since 1952 (when their series starts) there has been a spread of roughly 20 points in the vote for a Democratic presidential candidate between union and non-union households. The big exception was 1980, when union households were only 12 percent more supportive of Carter than of Reagan. In some sense, unions this time held their ground, returning to the old margin.

But one other comparison makes the union performance look better. Traditionally the union household vote has been roughly as pro-Democratic as blue-collar voters as a whole, suggesting that unions might not be as much an influence as social class. (The union household percentages for the Democratic candidate have been as follows: 1952-56, 1956-53, 1960-64, 1964-83, 1968-56, 1972-43, 1976-64, 1980-47.) This year, however, the NBC exit poll showed blue-collar workers favoring Reagan 55 to 45, virtually the inverse of the union vote. That may be a testament to effective work by the unions, and it may also convey a potentially dangerous gap in perceptions of "Why are you voting for Reagan?"

Geraldine Ferraro asked Chrysler workers with deep frustration.

self-interest among workers.

Factoring out blacks, who form a disproportionate share of union members and were already likely Mondale supporters, the union percentage slips a few points but still looks comparatively good. The AFL-CIO-sponsored survey also showed union members voting 72 percent for Democratic Senate candidates and 69 percent for Democratic House candidates. But a good percentage of a declining labor movement still means fewer votes and less clout.

Some exit polls show great variation: union members favored Reagan in North Carolina, New Jersey, Michigan and Mississippi, but voted fairly strongly against him in Texas, Iowa, Minnesota and Massachusetts, for example. NBC reported UAW members in Michigan preferring Reagan 52 to 48 percent. They were some of the workers most hard-hit by the recent recession; now many are back to work and apparently ignored their union's pleadings.

"I don't know how in the hell to explain it," said Henry Lacayo, head of the UAW Community Action Program. "We've got Chrysler workers saying they're going to vote for Reagan when he opposed the Chrysler recovery program. It's a difficult one to fathom. Do these people know their roots, where they've come from?" On the other hand, in Iowa, where there are many active, strong liberal union officials and a slowly recovering economy, union members voted 70 to 28 for Mondale, according to CBS.

Having tied their fortunes early and collectively to Mondale, most unions

worked harder than usual. "It was the most active election I've seen, and we experienced something different, tremendous unity and almost everyone out working," Machinist political director William Holayter said.

In the New Hampshire primary, unions discovered that an intensive program of personal contact by union stewards—later dubbed the "one-on-one" approach—brought Mondale majorities against the Hart tide. In August the AFL-CIO sent out packets describing how to implement such a strategy, and the more politically active unions formally adopted it. They typically left it up to local leaders to decide whether to make the effort. With a late start and weak mandate, the results were spotty, but nearly everyone hopes to expand such activity.

"The one-on-one program was obviously not executed to its fullest, and the labor movement has to recognize that," says Communications Workers Assistant Vice President Jan Pierce, who championed the approach as political director in the Northeast. "I don't think the plan was embraced from top to bottom."

If such political work by stewards continued at all times—not just before an election—unions could begin to create an

## But union members voted heavily Democratic.



enduring working-class political culture. That is important for reaching young workers, many of whom were for Reagan and not yet very pro-union.

Techniques and hard work are not enough, however. Fingerhut, a frustrated advisor to Mondale, argued that Democrats can win by stressing New Deal themes, Democratic heroes and residual party loyalties, and an economic populism—Democrats fight for average workers against the rich, the banks and the corporations.

"The New Deal ain't dead," Holayter argued on the basis of post-election polling, "and that made us happy." Democrats who voted for Reagan, Fingerhut reported, believed that government has a responsibility for creating jobs and protecting health and safety even more than the average Mondale supporter.

"Not only did they steal Democratic symbols, they stole Democratic themes," he said. "Republicans were running on jobs and prosperity, and we were running on the deficit—a classic switch. We lost a great issue—the enormous tax advantages given to corporations."

Most labor political strategists, who shared some of Fingerhut's criticisms, remain tied to the New Deal tradition. A new division in the Democratic Party deepened during this past year. Often described as a generational divide, it also reflected class and culture.

Steve Silbiger, deputy legislative director of AFSCME (public workers), described it this way: "There are people who never trusted the labor movement, don't want them in, don't identify with the masses and don't believe government should intervene in the economy, and there are people who believe in the old New Deal coalition. In the mind's eye of the neo-liberals, the marginal voter, the one you have to win, is a yuppie. In the mind's eye of a [New York Gov. Mario] Cuomo, the marginal voter you have to win is a blue-collar worker."

AFSCME Political Director Jerry Clark doesn't see the Democrats moving strongly left or right. "We were not wrong on issues," he argued. "That was borne out by polls and congressional voting. You can't move to the right without destroying the base that exists. You can't say blacks have no place to go, because they'll stay home. Same is true for the union member."

Yet he admits he is stumped about how to reach the yuppie or hold both blacks and Southern whites. One problem is the new hawkishness. "I wouldn't suggest in the wake of the election we advocate invasion of some Central American country every three months, but there has to be a message of preparedness. Talk in terms of a strong defense should be stressed more by Democratic candidates."

But AFSCME has been a leading critic of expanded military spending. Democrats can attack the waste of the military-industrial complex and still be for a stronger military, Clark argues, "but it's hard to get that message across."

Many labor political strategists write off the Reagan victory as inevitable and purely personal. They remain skeptical of calls for "new ideas." The ideas remain simple goals like good education, no hungry kids and jobs for all, AFL-CIO spokesman Rex Hardesty said: "We'll bargain with anyone on programs, but we feel very strongly there aren't very many new ideas."

But Jan Pierce argues that labor leaders must recognize the significance of the big Reagan vote. "We tend to give away the sexiest issues to the Republican Party," he said. "Instead of a progressive labor approach to taxation, education, national defense, foreign policy, we inundate members with repeal of 14B (right-to-work laws), elimination of food stamps for strikers—leadership issues rather than rank-and-file issues."

Like the Democrats in general, labor needs new thinking on alternative programs that preserve some of those old basic goals. Whatever satisfaction can be wrung from the statistics, the result was painfully clear—Reagan won big. That alone should prompt a search for better strategies that make victory possible without first surrendering principle. ■



# Mrazek

Continued from page 2

for Reagan and his economic programs.

Nonetheless, things seemed to be going so well that the weekend before the election the office pool began taking bets on Mrazek's final percentage. I had the lowest bet—until election day, when the high Republican turn-out caused someone to come in lower—though I'm not sure why. I had always thought Mrazek could lose, despite all his district service, his mobile office, mailings and the other advantages of incumbency. Yet it still seemed unlikely.

But there is nothing like money in people's bank accounts and two foreign cars in every garage. What electoral strategies can liberals pursue when otherwise "enlightened" upper middle class voters de-

cide to vote their pocketbooks? Until the next recession, I have serious questions about the direction liberal groups' political action should take in a second Reagan term, but no answers. I am comfortable with the Mrazek strategy that got him re-elected. And yet there must be a more coherent way to give voters a choice between "Reagan's economic policies" and the "other."

For the record, Mrazek ran almost 17 percent ahead of the Mondale/Ferraro ticket in his district. There were more than 50,000 newly registered voters in the district, many of them under 25. They received much less attention from the campaign than they should have because the Board of Elections didn't have the print-out available until late October. If the young voters particularly followed national trends, they voted heavily for Reagan and may well have brought Quinn as close as he came.

Rachel Gorlin writes regularly for *In These Times* on politics.

# Theology

Continued from page 3

veniat, says that by the end of the '70s, the Lopez-Hengsbach study circle had gotten its message across. In 1978, "strongly supported by his German bishop friends, a Cardinal from Poland mounted the papal throne." His origin and experience, wrote Luning recently in the *Kolner Stadtanzeiger*, led the new pope, John Paul II, to see "the social question of the century" not as the misery of the Third World but as the East-West conflict.

Friends of liberation theology in the Americas want to believe that the popular Polish pope is really on their side. But Europeans have no such illusions. They see the pope's statements about the poor and liberation simply as the way to split those themes and recuperate them for the conservative church and, in the process, eliminate the radical church of the poor.

*Der Spiegel* reported in September that "for the independent-minded monsignori in Rome there is no doubt that the pope, who brought Cardinal Ratzinger to Rome in 1981, wants to break liberation theology's claim to be a socially critical people's church with the help of the conservative German bishops. For the poor Latin American church is financially dependent on German bishops." Ratzinger brings to the revived Inquisition the prestige of German theology.

## Setbacks.

The steady campaign has had some setbacks. Lopez and his friends excluded all liberationists from preparations for the 1979 conference of CELAM in Puebla, Mexico. The aim was to get the pope to endorse a clear condemnation of the church base communities and start undoing the work of Vatican Council II and Medellin in 1968.

Lopez wrote to his Brazilian friend Luciano Cabral Duarte, bishop of Aracaju,

to "train like a boxer" and "prepare his heavy artillery" for the Puebla conference. The Mexican daily *Uno Mas Uno* got hold of the letter and published it. The attack at Puebla was toned down.

Nevertheless, in early 1980 Lopez became president of CELAM and his friend Cabral Duarte first vice president.

Firmly controlled by Lopez and his friends, CELAM turned its "heavy artillery" against the revolution in Nicaragua. In 1980, the German Catholic Church acceded to Lopez' request to cut off all financial aid to the church of the poor. But the German church helped finance a CELAM "catechism campaign" in Nicaragua that was to compete with the Sandinista literacy campaign coordinated by Jesuit priest Fernando Cardenal, who refused to obey a May 1980 Vatican order to stay out of politics.

An international mission of Pax Christi visited Nicaragua from June 20 to July 22, 1981, and reported that the church was divided. The Pax Christi report expressed concern over the role of CELAM President Lopez, who "has intervened in the conflict exhorting religious authorities to adopt a hard line against the revolution."

By this time, Lopez enjoyed more support than ever in high places. The 1980 Santa Fe report on future Reagan administration policy in Latin America had mentioned the need to combat liberation theology. At the same time, conservative U.S. foundations had backed the new Institute for Religion and Democracy set up in Washington, D.C., mainly to get American churches to cut off their aid to people's church groups in Central and South America. Lopez could also count on support from the secretive, traditionalist international layman's order, *Opus Dei*, called by some churchmen "the Vatican's KGB."

Money was also available from various anti-Communist funds, such as *Kirche in Not* (the Church in need) set up after World War II by Dutch father Van Straaten to aid the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe. These anti-Communist fund-raising networks count on a store of good will from the Polish Pope as they turn their efforts toward Latin America. Vekemans is active in all these efforts.

The Inquisition got underway last year. Ratzinger sent 10 points criticizing Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez to the Peruvian bishops and asked them to comment. He did so apparently because Lopez especially hates Gutierrez and the Peruvian church seemed weak enough to give in. Once the Peruvian church endorsed a condemnation of certain "erroneous ideas," this could be shown to other churches to get them to agree. Among the Peruvian bishops are half a dozen members of *Opus Dei* and several hard-line Jesuits.

But the plan didn't work. Ratzinger apparently lacks diplomatic skill and underestimated the Cardinal of Lima, Juan Landazzuri Ricketts, an aristocrat who didn't like outsiders attacking his proteges. He defended Gutierrez and the Peruvian bishops deadlocked in April 1983 by a count of 18 to 18, with five abstentions. Unable to decide, they were all summoned to Rome.

Lopez' rapid rise continued. Thanks largely to strenuous support from Cardinal Baggio, he was named cardinal last February 2 at the age of 48. In a private audience, the pope told him that "his contribution to the study and clarification of theology, in particular so-called liberation theology, was and remains an eminent service to the church."

The new cardinal immediately directed the attention of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to another personal enemy: Brazilian Franciscan theologian Leonardo Boff, who was preparing a 40-volume anthology of Latin American liberation theology.

Boff is a prolific writer and an exuberant visionary who can be counted on to say more than anyone else would care to endorse. Thus he is the ideal target for the opening wedge phase of an Inquisition.

Nevertheless, Boff was accompanied to Rome by "my two guardian angels," Cardinal Evaristo Arns of Sao Paulo and Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider of Fortal-

eza. Their presence "means that the highest ranks of the Brazilian church, a church with 325 bishops, is standing behind liberation theology," Boff said joyously.

Early this year, the Vatican also sent the Primate of the West German Catholic Church, Cardinal Hoffner, to Brazil to complain to Arns about the theology faculty of Sao Paulo University—the only one totally devoted to liberation theology.

Using arguments worked up in the '70s by Lopez, Hengsbach, Vekemans and company, Ratzinger maintains that any use of "Marxist analysis" inevitably leads to "having to accept the entire ideology."

This directly contradicts the position of Cardinal Lorscheider, who makes a distinction between Marxist analysis and philosophy. "What is Marxist analysis of reality? In general, it's an effort to interpret coherently society as a whole," according to the Brazilian cardinal.

Ratzinger's refusal to allow this distinction means in effect that any coherent effort to interpret contemporary society as a whole can be branded as heretic, even if Marxist philosophy is explicitly rejected. The church conservatives want to ban any critical awareness among Christians of social structures.

The Catholic hierarchy is divided. Monsignor Agostino Casaroli, Vatican secretary of state, is believed to disapprove of the Ratzinger Inquisition. Back from an October trip to Brazil, Archbishop Godfried Danneels of Brussels said, "If I were a Latin American, I would do the same as the people I saw at the base who are renewing the church.... It would be a catastrophe if they were discouraged."

In Brazil, only a minority of bishops are aligned with Lopez, but they have easy access to the mass media. A single newspaper, *O Globo*, linked to U.S. groups, controls practically 80 percent of the Brazilian television audience. The "Globocracy" regularly attacks the church base communities and liberation theology, provides a forum for church conservatives and distorts the picture not only for Brazilians but also for foreign observers following the situation through the Brazilian press.

For eight or 10 years, says Comblin, a systematic campaign has been underway to destroy the prestige of the Brazilian Bishops Conference. "Denunciations, suspicions, accusations of being incapable of combatting Marxism effectively, of incapacity to combat Communist penetration of the church. These are the accusations made and repeated tirelessly, constantly, ceaselessly, in public, in private, behind the scenes, everywhere. Coming from CELAM and principally from its president Alfonso Lopez."

Lopez has a long-term strategy for changing the orientation of the Brazilian Bishops Conference "in the most subtle way," explains Comblin. "Gradually replace the bishops. It will take 20, 30 years, but in 30 years on the average the whole Episcopate is replaced, because the average age of nomination is 45 and retirement age is 75."

Dom Helder Camara of Recife has passed that age and retired, but his replacement is a thorny problem that is taking time.

"When one wants to condemn an enemy, what one does is to present an imaginary exaggerated figure of all the faults, all the defects," says Comblin, explaining the method of the Inquisition. "Invent a theoretical being. That's what Cardinal Ratzinger did. He didn't quote anyone. He explained that away by saying he didn't want those who were quoted to think they were blameless. But I think it would have been difficult to find a quotation to illustrate his portrait of liberation theology."

"They did the same thing in the past when they got Protestantism condemned, making a terrible portrait by pushing every affirmation to its extreme," he continues. "A caricature is created that does not exist but serves as a warning. For if no one corresponds to that portrait, everyone is suspected of resembling it."

"It's a method that casts suspicion on everyone. All of liberation theology is put on the defensive. For years to come, people are going to have to defend themselves against suspicion," he concludes. ■

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By Chris Norton

## MANAGUA

**T**HE DIZZYING WEEK OF November 4-10 began with the Sandinista victory at the polls and ended with Nicaragua in a state of full military alert. In a show of force designed to thwart possible U.S.-directed aggression, tanks were deployed throughout Managua. Nicaragua hadn't been this tense since last year's invasion of Grenada convinced the country that it was next on Ronald Reagan's hit list.

The U.S. didn't wait long to respond to the elections. Even as Nicaraguans were going to the polls, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz was calling the elections a "farce." In what proved to be a striking example of Washington's ability to define the issues, the Reagan administration's denunciation got at least as much press as the generally favorable accounts filed from U.S. reporters in Nicaragua for the elections.

At the same time Americans were re-electing President Reagan, intermittent news flashes reported that a Soviet ship thought by the Reagan administration to be carrying Soviet MiG-21s was headed for Nicaragua.

The news "leak" turned out to be false, yet it served to reinforce the administration's image of Nicaragua as warlike. The supposed MiG threat also gave the U.S. the excuse to move warships close to the Pacific coast port of Corinto when the Soviet freighter entered on November 7, and to start blatant spying missions over Nicaragua, with the aim of intimidating the populace. The loud sonic booms from sophisticated supersonic spy planes rattled windows throughout the country and even broke some in this capital city.

"At first we thought it was bombs, but now we know it's just the *Pajaro Negro* (Spanish for black bird) crashing the atmosphere," said a 58-year-old woman as she stood next to a Soviet tank being set in place on a side street along the industrial belt leading to the Managua airport. "If the Yankees come we'll fight, of course. We'll defend our country."

The mood here was defiant as people gathered in small groups to watch the soldiers set the tanks in place and members of the workers militias dug trenches nearby. "It was hard but we defeated Somoza with molotov cocktails. It's not the size of the bombs but your willingness to fight that matters," said a small-scale merchant from Managua's eastern market.

The flights and the sonic booms recalled the CIA overflights and bombings of Guatemala City in 1954 that demoralized the population. Shortly thereafter, the left Arbenz government was overthrown by CIA-directed forces.

The parallels end there, however. Nicaragua has a revolutionary army and a politicized, mobilized and armed population, in contrast to Guatemala in 1954 or Chile in 1973. Yet the war threat is forcing Nicaragua, already under economic strain, to devote even more resources to defense. For example, the members of the workers militias are on leave from their workplaces but continue to receive their regular paychecks. And any increased mobilizations will further hurt production.

Just how seriously Nicaragua is taking the threats of U.S. aggression is evidenced by the decision to keep home for the defense of Managua 20,000 university students who had volunteered to pick the coffee crop.

"We have made the decision that it is preferable that the coffee should fall than that the country should fall," said Agriculture Minister Jaime Wheelcock.

This action cut the coffee harvest forces by half. Coffee accounts for about a quarter of Nicaragua's export earnings. Even before the MiG episode, the *contra* activity in the mountainous coffee producing regions was expected to reduce the harvest by 30 percent.

The increased U.S. threat of "retaliatory" measures highlights the Reagan administration's economic war—a war of attrition that seeks to strangle the Nica-



Many members of the workers militias, on leave from their workplaces, are now serving in border patrols.

## Behind U.S. war of economic attrition

raguan economy. *Contra* attacks and the threat of more direct U.S. military intervention have forced Nicaragua to devote perhaps as much as 45 percent of its budget to defense.

Direct *contra* attacks have destroyed many of the bridges, grain storage silos, schools and clinics and trucks in the mountainous northern part of the country. Seventy percent of Nicaragua's corn and beans are normally grown in the war zone, and in the past two years the *contras* have burned the fields and grainaries of many cooperatives and have forced others to be abandoned.

The revolution overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979 originally aimed at increasing the production of basic grains, but many small producers have left the war zones or continue to produce only for their own consumption because in many areas it is too dangerous for trucks to enter to collect the harvest. This year's collection of corn and beans is expected to be half the normal harvest in the northern provinces. The *contras* have destroyed or isolated fully 8 percent of Nicaragua's grain storage capacity.

The war of economic attrition is complemented by a less visible but equally deadly U.S.-orchestrated economic blockade that has cut Nicaragua off from many credit lines, particularly international lending agencies under U.S. domination, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank. The effects go way beyond the soft, low-interest loans these agencies disperse since money granted through these agencies is an important signal to private lenders on whether to loan or not.

The Nicaraguan government estimates the U.S. economic blockade has cost the country \$550 million (not including the *contra* war and its damages) since the Reagan administration came into office in 1981. The result has been an acute shortage of dollars. Also, a third of the government grain transport trucks are now paralyzed for lack of spare parts and tires are difficult to get, while medicine and consumer goods like lightbulbs are impossible to find.

The U.S. attack on the Nicaraguan economy compounds the economic crisis facing all of Central America and much of the Third World—the dependence on agricultural and raw materials export and the need to import oils and manufacture

products at constantly rising prices. These declining terms of trade and high interest rates have contributed to the Third World's massive indebtedness.

Nicaragua inherited a debt of \$1.6 billion from Somoza and then borrowed \$2 billion more to rebuild the economy after his overthrow. With exports that will total just over \$400 million and with \$800-900 million of imports, Nicaragua's debt, already at \$3.5 billion, will rise substantially this year.

Like many other Third World countries, Nicaragua is "poor, small, underdeveloped and peripheral to the system," according to Xavier Gorostiaga, the Panamanian Jesuit economist who heads the Institute for Social and Economic Investigation in Managua. "Our products don't have a future," he said. Sugar is now being sold at the giveaway price of 4¢ a pound. The price of cotton will fall, he predicts, as cheap oil makes synthetic fabric less expensive. And Europe is now self-sufficient in meat.

On the other hand, even products as basic as paper must be imported. And all glass must come from Guatemala, the only Central American country that produces it.

Even before the *contra* war and the U.S. campaign of economic destabilization began in earnest in 1982, Nicaragua recognized its dependency on the U.S. and planned to "diversify" its dependence by maintaining a quarter of its trade with the U.S. and increasing trade with Europe, Latin America and the socialist and non-aligned countries.

U.S. pressures speeded the process, for example, when the U.S. cut Nicaragua's sugar quota by 90 percent, and Algeria bought that share at the same price. And when the U.S. cut wheat sales to Nicaragua, the Soviet Union and Argentina made up the difference.

The lack of soft, easy-term loans means less hard currency and more dependency on credit lines of friendly countries. Thus Nicaragua is forced to buy products from those countries rather than shopping around for the best prices. Formerly, most of Nicaragua's industrial and mechanical base used U.S. technology. But now, for instance, Managua has buses from eight different countries, which means that it needs spare parts and mechanics able to work on all different models.

Despite the economic hardships, the

Sandinistas have gone ahead with economic plans designed to obey the "logic of the majority" instead of the transnational and large capital, according to Gorostiaga.

The cornerstone of this new development has been Nicaragua's agrarian reform, which has distributed three million acres of land to more than 45,000 families, or 32 percent of the peasants in Nicaragua. At the same time the government has helped large growers maintain their production.

It has also invested in large-scale development projects such as a huge geothermal energy project, new hydroelectric dams, the Malacatoya sugar mill that will also produce energy, the Chiltepe milk project and a tobacco project in which Bulgaria will supply processing equipment and Holland will supply inputs and technical assistance.

But the results of this investment have not been seen yet. Other sectors of the economy also in high gear are producing for the war effort and thus their goods are not available for consumers. For example, the construction industry has built numerous guardposts and barracks; thousands of uniforms and boots have also been produced.

FSLN opponents such as the right-wing Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) charge that the Sandinistas have ruined the economy by "centralization and collectivization by the state." Because they have no faith in the Sandinistas' commitment to a mixed economy, they claim there is no incentive to invest and say they are on "death row" as a private sector.

Despite COSEP's claims, the government has been careful to provide close to 100 percent of the credit needs of the agro-export sector. Only those private producers that are de-capitalizing or not producing have been expropriated under the agrarian reform. In fact, most state property was confiscated from Somoza. The percentage of the gross internal product under state control has grown only 5 percent in the last five years, from 35 to 40 percent, according to Gorostiaga.

He also points out that Nicaragua had a 5 percent growth rate in 1983, the highest in Central America. Granted it was an "economic dynamism with financial disequilibrium," as the U.S. economic commission for Latin America noted in its report. And much of 1983's growth was in production destined for military use.

The 1984 growth is estimated at 2.5 percent despite the war, but Gorostiaga points out that as the need for defense increases, social spending and infrastruc-

Continued on page 12



# Reflections

*Editor's note: The following reflections by In These Times' Washington correspondent were originally delivered in a November 10 speech for the Progressive Roundtable in Minneapolis.*

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**A**LREADY DEMOCRATS AND Republicans have offered wildly different interpretations of the 1984 election. Those Democrats, like House Speaker Tip O'Neill, who mortgaged themselves to former Vice President Walter Mondale's campaign, suggested that Ronald Reagan's landslide was of no great significance: it was due to Reagan's pleasing personality and skill as a performer, the economic recovery and Mondale's lack of a pleasant television personality; and it was adequately counterbalanced by the Democrats' winning two Senate seats and losing only 14 House seats. Against this view, Republicans have suggested that Reagan's landslide conclusively confirmed a trend toward a classic realignment first seen in 1968 and dramatically evidenced in 1980. Reagan is the Franklin Roosevelt of the '80s. Conservative Republicanism is New Deal liberalism. And 1984 is 1936.

2. The Republican view, while exaggerated, is closer to the truth. The Republicans have not become the majority party in the way that the Democrats were in 1936 or 1960. The Republicans still lack a grassroots base in the deep South, even though many of the local Democrats who win office are politically indistinguishable from conservative Republicans. Also, the trend toward independent voting and split tickets may have made any classic realignment along New Deal lines impossible.

But it is fair to say that Republican conservatism is now the most vital politics in the U.S. It is rapidly winning adherents and setting the terms of debate. And at the presidential and congressional levels, the Republicans have now assured themselves of a very solid base in the West and the South from which to contest for power over the next two decades.

## Long-term Republican trend.

3. Let's review the Democratic arguments about the Reagan landslide. Can it be understood simply as the victory of a single exceptional politician? (Mondale's speechwriter remarked that only Robert Redford might have defeated Reagan this year.) Not really.

Reagan's victory continued a trend first clearly seen in 1968 when Richard Nixon and George Wallace together captured 57 percent of the popular vote and the entire South and West except for

landslide? Certainly it helped. One need only compare the GOP's gain of 14 House seats with its loss of 26 seats in 1982, when a recession was taking place. But at the same time, it was highly unusual for the party of an incumbent to lose only 26 seats in a mid-term election, and nearly miraculous for an incumbent's party to do so in the midst of a recession.

In 1938, for instance, as the economy turned downward, Roosevelt's Democrats lost 81 House seats and eight Senate seats. And in 1984, Reagan won 55 percent or more of the vote in such high unemployment states as West Virginia, Alabama and Michigan. So Reagan didn't just ride a temporary and fortuitous economic recovery to victory.

5. We're also not just talking about the level of the presidency. In 1984 the Republicans did lose two Senate seats, but they had more to lose with 17 incumbents up for re-election compared to 12 Democrats. They actually won 17 Senate elections and lost 16. And the Republicans that were defeated were damaged goods: Iowa's Roger Jepsen was reputed to be the stupidest senator, and Illinois' Chuck Percy was opposed by Republican conservatives. The Republicans as a whole did far better than they had done in 1956 and 1972, other presidential landslide years.

In the South, the Republicans appear poised not only to lock up the presidential vote, but also to begin to build a local organization to challenge the Democrats (see *In These Times*, Nov. 14). If the South is added to the West, which is already dominated by the Republicans, the party has a hold on the country's most prosperous and growing regions, while the Democrats are stuck with the shrinking states of the so-called Frost-belt.

## Politics of defiant optimism.

6. The Republican trend is based on their ability to take advantage of the major developments in American society and politics over the last 15 years—the nation's decline as a world power, the obsolescence of Keynesian economics and the growing regional and racial division within the society created by uneven economic growth.

7. American military and economic decline relative to other countries is not as important as the effect that it has had on the American consciousness. It has produced a kind of national anxiety, characterized at times by shame (the Iranian hostage crisis) and at other times by an intense nostalgia about the period when America was the unchallenged industrial and military world leader. Both the anxiety and nostalgia were apparent during the Olympics this summer.

8. The Republicans and Democrats have both understood the American de-



Illustrations: Peter Hannan Photo: Steve Kagan

Republicans were calling on Americans to roll up their sleeves. While the Democrats were counseling Americans to sign arms control treaties with the Soviet Union, the Republicans were saying that the U.S. had to regain its superiority. While the Democrats were saying that the U.S. could no longer be the world's policeman, the Republicans were saying that the U.S. had to do whatever was necessary to stop Communism in the Third World.

The Democrats' message was one of resignation and even despair; the Republicans' was a call to glory. The Republican message struck deep chords, as Ronald Reagan showed in 1980 and then again in 1984. Americans don't want to be told that they have lost. They want to be told that they can be number one again.

9. The second development is that the Keynesian techniques of deficit spending, tax cuts and military and social spending could not alleviate the unemployment, inflation and slow growth of the '70s. Keynesianism's success in the U.S. was based upon the nation's and the world's relative economic health. It functioned like an antibiotic for a virus rather than as surgery for a major illness. But in the '70s, the U.S. was buff-

also began to suffer, ironically, from the accelerated introduction of automation in both manufacturing and services, which has begun to eliminate as many jobs as it creates. (See "Computerization changes the rules," by Fred Block and John Judis in the November 2 *Commonweal*.) As a result of automation and worldwide overcapacity, the U.S. has suffered from intractable high unemployment that Keynesian techniques cannot begin to cure.

10. The fact of Keynesianism's ineffectiveness led to the perception that Keynesian techniques—stigmatized in the term "big government"—were themselves the cause of unemployment, inflation and slow economic growth. There was scant analytical basis for this conclusion—at best one could argue that by encouraging deficit spending, Keynesian techniques contributed to spiraling inflation and interest rates, which in turn slowed growth—but there was a well-traveled ideological basis for it.

From Tom Paine's *Common Sense* to the present, Americans have tended to blame "big government" for their ills and to ascribe to the free market magical curative powers. Historian Louis Hartz has written of Americans' Lockean liberalism. In this case, its hold was augmented by Americans' anxiety about their place in the world. The free market was not only identified as the alternative to big government, but it was also identified with the time of American greatness, with the frontier and with rugged individualism. And big government was inextricably linked to the nation's fall from grace.

11. The Democrats' response to Keynesianism's obsolescence was either blind doggedness—epitomized in the pursuit of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill—or the pessimism and resignation they enunciated with respect to the nation's military position in the world. The essence of Democratic neo-liberalism is the recognition that full employment is a dream of the past and that Americans will have to settle for less. In policy terms, this means that Democrats

*The loser this year was not just Walter Mondale but an entire generation of Democrats. It's time to start over again.*

Texas and Washington. The trend was interrupted by Watergate but resumed in 1980. There is no doubt that Reagan is a brilliant political performer, but Nixon won in 1968 and 1972 in spite of his television persona. Reagan is a superb messenger for a message whose day has come.

4. Did the recovery affect Reagan's

cline, but they have responded to it in quite different ways. Beginning in the mid-'70s with California Governor Jerry Brown's talk of an "era of limits," the Democrats have counseled resignation and adjustment. In contrast, the Republicans have counseled defiant optimism.

While the Democrats were suggesting that Americans "tighten their belts," the

fettered not only by higher oil prices and growing competition abroad, but by increasing overcapacity in the key products of America's postwar industries. Too many countries were now producing cars, steel, synthetic fibers and other goods relative to the demand that existed for them.

In the late '70s and early '80s, the U.S.



on

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will have to worry about deficits and social spending as much as Republicans used to worry about them.

By contrast, the Republican response, epitomized in the rise of supply-side economics, has been to invoke the power of the free market against big government, but with a subtle twist. While railing against big government, the supply-siders in effect endorsed a perverse form of Keynesianism that proved marginally useful in stimulating the economy. The Republicans captured the ideological high ground while co-opting the Democrats' policies.

12. The economy continued to grow during the '70s and early '80s, but in such a way as to create prosperity for some regions and privation for others. Groups of Americans were also affected differently by the uneven economic growth. As the Urban League's annual reports made abundantly clear, the gap between white and black incomes widened in the '70s and early '80s, with blacks concentrated in decaying central cities and in industries most affected by overcapacity and automation.

The fact of different economic effects created widely different perceptions. While many whites feel they are making progress, almost all blacks feel weighed down by economic stagnation and by what they believe are unfair government policies. And among those whites who have felt threatened by their economic circumstances, a good many regard the growing black underclass as part of the threat. Whites, to a great extent, are captivated by the promise of the free market; blacks, to a surprising degree, remain immune to its spell; they look upon government as salvation rather than damnation.

13. The Democrats have responded to this disparity of outcomes and beliefs by a politics of equitable austerity. The Democrats argue that Americans will have to tighten their belts, but that everyone will have to do it the same number of notches.

The Republicans insist that nobody should have to tighten their belts, but they have pursued policies that disproportionately favor the better-off. They have also opposed affirmative action remedies advocated by blacks for their situation. While usually eschewing direct racist appeals, they have won much of the racist vote, particularly among white ethnics in the North and white Southerners resentful or fearful of black demands.

14. The present Republican coalition does not simply grow out of Barry Goldwater in 1964, but also out of the racist period of George Wallace. This is the darker side of Republican conservatism. Very few Republican conservatives use overt racial appeals—North Carolina's Jesse Helms is the exception. But much of the conservative Republican program and rhetoric contains a coded racial message that recalls Wallace's '60s rhetoric: the opposition to big government is understood as opposition to welfare spending for blacks and to federal imposition of integration and affirmative action on states and localities.

15. The Democrats' success from 1932 to 1968 was based on their apparent ability to ensure prosperity through government intervention and to maintain the nation's global place through arms spending and invasion. In the end, the Democrats' success was dependent on American capitalism's success, and when it started to falter, the Democrats could not respond in such a way as to preserve their majority coalition.

Democratic neo-liberalism was an inviting target to Republican conservatives, who invoked the nation's glorious past

and the free market. At the same time, the Republicans also took advantage of the growing divisions between white and black within the Democratic ranks. As a result, they are now on the verge of building a majority coalition, rooted most firmly in the West and the South, and uniting the white traditionally Republican upper classes with Southern white workers and Northern white ethnics. The Democrats have become a party in which blacks, who make up barely 10 percent of the population, are the only dependable voting bloc.

16. Mondale's landslide defeat was in part due to reasons peculiar to him: his ties to the Carter administration, his choice of a Northern liberal running mate with no appeal in the South and his method of political organization, which reflected a mind still mired in '40s Minnesota Democratic Farmer-Labor Party politics. By basing his campaign on endorsements from the leaders of Washington-based organizations, Mondale achieved the worst of all possible worlds. He got few votes he would not have gotten anyway (he discovered that the AFL-CIO's hold over "labor" is as tenuous as the National Organization for Women's hold over "women"), and he allowed Reagan to portray him as the "Washington" or the "establishment" candidate.

But what destroyed Mondale was a politics not peculiar to him, his espousal of the Democratic neo-liberal creed, whether in his focus on deficits and raising taxes, his pleas for a "fair" austerity or his support for peace rather than strength. Mondale had nothing to offer the typical middle-class voter but grim resignation and altruism: "Walter Mondale and his Temple of Gloom," Reagan quipped. It is amazing that Mondale got as many votes as he did.

#### The future.

17. Over the next decade, the Republicans will face significant obstacles as they try to build a stable majority coalition. Among Republican office holders, the most important conflicts are between the post-Goldwater conservative Republicans and the "Main Street" Midwestern Republicans, represented by Kansas Sen.

*It can be said  
that Republican  
conservatism is  
now the most  
vital politics  
in the U.S.*

Robert Dole or Illinois Gov. Jim Thompson. The Main Street Republicans have provided the Republicans with an important voting bloc in the prairie states and even the industrial Midwest. And they have continued to provide most of the leadership in the Senate and House. The Republicans would be weakened by their loss.

But in Reagan's next term, the Main Street and conservative Republicans will clash repeatedly over deficits and taxes, arms control and the New Right's social agenda. The first battle will be over who will succeed Main Streeter Howard Baker as the Senate majority leader, with Dole paired against conservatives Jim McClure and Richard Lugar.



Photos: Der Spiegel

18. The Republicans also face a serious conflict between their base among young, middle-class voters, attracted by the party's optimism and economics, and their base among Southern white fundamentalists, attracted by the party's opposition to abortion and support for school prayer and church schools. If Reagan presses the fundamentalists' social agenda and appoints Supreme Court justices indifferent to the separation between church and state, the Republicans could lose an entire generation of voters.

19. In assessing the Republicans' program, one must distinguish between lack of success and failure. Roosevelt never did bring the nation out of the Depression, just as Reagan never did restore the kind of growth and employment that the U.S. enjoyed in the '50s.

But majority parties do eventually have to deliver. They have to show that they are capable of keeping the promises of their politics. The Republicans may not be able to. Supply-side economics and monetarism, deregulation and rising arms expenditures may accelerate the nation's economic decline. And neither arms expenditures nor the threat of intervention will necessarily restore American global supremacy. Either an interventionist war like Vietnam or a depression could destroy the conservative Republicans the way the Great Depression destroyed the old Republican Party.

20. If a new recession hits in 1986, the Democrats will certainly recapture the Senate. They could even win the presidency in 1988 if the Republicans break out in factions and the Democrats field a regionally and generationally attractive ticket. But these possibilities of imminent victory should not obscure the deeper problems that the party faces.

The divisions within the Democratic ranks are more profound than those within the GOP. The most important of these conflicts is between black Democrats and Southern and white ethnic Democrats. The combination of black political empowerment—evidenced either in Chicago Mayor Harold Washington's administration or the Rev. Jesse Jackson's cam-

paign—and the Republicans' coded racial messages are driving whites out of the Democratic Party and into the Republican Party.

21. The Democrats also face profound programmatic obstacles. While the Democratic neo-liberals have little to offer voters, the left-wing Democrats' full-employment and reindustrialization policies are neither credible nor workable. They cannot achieve full employment—the trend toward automation and the pressures of worldwide competition is too great, and they will probably slow growth.

There is the potential for an entirely different Democratic economics lurking beneath the neo-liberal surface, using the promise of automation and post-industrial change to free Americans from work rather than increasing unemployment, but the corollaries of such a policy—for instance, the distinction of work from income—are presently too radical to be contemplated.

In foreign policy, the Democrats have a different problem. In the wake of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, Democratic doves began to develop a foreign policy that was both viable and morally commendable. It was based on the recognition that the U.S. could no longer hope to construct the world in its image, but would have to content itself with using diplomacy and example to pressure right- and left-wing dictatorships toward democracy and human rights. In accordance with this more modest role, the Democratic doves called for widespread agreements with the Soviet Union and the reduction of Americans' overseas troop commitments.

But what is morally commendable is not necessarily politically popular. Both Republican and Democratic hawks were able successfully to play upon popular anxieties about decline to discredit the Democrats' policy. They could also take advantage of the Democrats' unwillingness at times to accept the full consequences of their abandonment of military intervention. What would happen, the Re-

*Continued on next page*



Continued from preceding page

publicans asked, if the Communists did take over El Salvador? And all the Democrats could say was that it would never happen if Uncle Sam behaved like a gentleman.

22. If it is unlikely that the Republicans will achieve a classic realignment, it is even more unlikely that the Democrats will, in the near future, recapture their majority coalition. They are too divided and their politics are too unpopular and implausible. It may take a depression to shake Americans from their fascination with the free market and another Vietnam—or worse—to remind Americans of the perils of global ambition. But the Democrats can still play an important role in American politics.

23. The Democratic situation in 1984 is not analogous to the Republican plight of 1964 when the fledgling GOP conservatives were steamrolled by Lyndon Johnson. The Mondale Democrats are most similar to the Sen. Robert Taft Republicans of 1952, who expired as a political tendency after they lost the presidential nomination battle to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. Some of Taft's principles were eventually incorporated into Goldwater conservatism, but the latter had to be created anew in the '50s and '60s.

One can expect to see two tendencies among Democrats: some will play the role that the moderate and liberal Republicans did within their party, seeking to accommodate their party's principles to those of the majority party. Democratic neo-conservatives have already begun to do so.

But other Democrats, like the lonely Republican conservatives of the '50s, can be expected to strike out in a different direction—on one hand, militantly opposing Republican conservatism's indifference to the poor and global interventionism; and on the other hand, patiently fashioning a new politics by which Democrats could appeal to a majority.

24. In the early 20th century and again after World War II, socialists played a key role in shaping American progressivism and liberalism. They provided many

of the formative programmatic ideas and set the limit beyond which liberalism and progressivism would not go.

The present crisis of American liberalism is, at base, a crisis of socialism. There is no longer a coherent socialist perspective that liberalism can define itself against.

In the U.S., socialism was understood to be either the Soviet Union or a democratic parliamentary version of the Soviet Union; the hopelessness of either model is readily apparent, but no new model has arisen. And the attempts by socialists to govern in advanced capitalist countries have proved uninspiring, if not disastrous.

As a result, liberals flounder between free-market nostalgia and a discredited Keynesianism. And many young people who might otherwise be attracted to socialism are drawn to the apocalyptic anti-politics of nuclear or ecological doom. Worse still, they become Reaganites: better a future modelled on the glorious past than a future without any lines and shadings. ■

## FSLN

Continued from page 9

ture investment will have to diminish, thus reducing the growth rate.

According to Gorostiaga, Nicaragua is a subversive economic model and a threat to the U.S. because if it works it will be a model of independent growth for much of Latin America. The U.S. is particularly threatened by the breakdown of its political and economic hegemony in its own backyard, Gorostiaga says.

Still, Nicaragua is now functioning under a war economy in which austerity measures are in effect and real wages have fallen drastically, especially in the city. Shortages of basic foods and goods have been a particular problem, although present supplies are adequate. One cause was mistakes by the government. Corn had to be imported last year because it

had set the corn price too low and there was little incentive to plant. Sorghum, used for cattle feed, was also underpriced.

The government had previously set low official consumer prices for basic foodstuffs and had subsidized that price. Yet the shortages fueled food speculation, and food was often not available at the official price but available in the flourishing black market. In the eastern market in Managua, food was sold at several times the official price.

In 1983 the government instituted a guarantee card for sugar and then added rice, soap and cooking oil. The card guaranteed the right to buy a set amount of the products at a low official rate. Since production of these products was centralized, it was easy to control the supply.

Shortages of other basic products continued, however, and under pressure from poor *barrios* who couldn't find affordable food, the government instituted a new food distribution system in August.

The new system added corn, beans, sorghum and salt to the guarantee card, and a new system of neighborhood outlets, each serving about 1,000 people, was established. The government also started selling the same goods being sold at speculative prices in the eastern market in supermarkets in which the government had an interest. In this way, the government both undercut the speculators—even succeeding in lowering prices in the eastern market somewhat—and reduced the complaints of the middle class by making products available at a higher rate to those willing to pay the price.

The new system has its problems though—powdered milk has been available at higher prices in the supermarket, but not in many neighborhood outlets. Another problem is that the guarantee card does not cover all a family's needs, making it necessary to seek more food at higher prices. Many outlets are open only at limited times and only have sufficient working capital to buy a week's supply at a time.

Food continues to be sold in the eastern market at higher rates, even though it is technically illegal. But the government has been cracking down on large-scale speculators by searching pick-up trucks entering Managua and confiscating their cargo if they don't have a receipt for large purchases of foodstuffs.

The government also realized that the best way to fight shortages is to increase production. Ambitious plans are underway to double crop the Pacific coast cotton fields with corn by irrigating during the dry season.

Planners eventually want to move corn

production to the Pacific coast plain. They realize the harmful ecological effects of growing an annual crop like corn on steep hillsides subject to erosion. The mountainous areas will eventually be slated for coffee or cattle production. But in the midst of a war, long-range agricultural planning seems like a utopian ideal; instead, planning is directed at survival instead of developmental goals.

The state accounts for 40 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), a much lower percentage than countries such as Mexico, Brazil and Chile. Of the 60 percent in private hands, half of it is in the hands of large producers, who Gorostiaga separates into three groups, each of which controls about 10 percent of the GDP.

The first group are the "patriotic producers," who are continuing to produce at an historic level and who are sympathetic to the Sandinistas, either through blood ties or for other reasons. The country's largest sugar mill, San Antonio, which employs 7,000, is owned by a "patriotic producer" who has continued to invest and expand production.

The second category Gorostiaga calls the *climatis*, since they are always complaining that the investment climate isn't right. Politically, this group is aligned with the Conservative Democratic, the Independent Liberals and the Popular Social Christian Party.

The third group is known as the *contras*. They totally oppose the Sandinista model and many are decapitalizing slowly and producing only the minimum necessary to prevent their property from being confiscated. Although they represent only 2 percent of the economically active population, their power and influence far exceeds their small numbers, since they control the opposition newspaper, *La Prensa*, and the main private-sector organization COSEP.

The other 30 percent of Nicaragua's GDP comes from small producers. They include peasants, either independent or part of cooperatives, as well as artisans such as shoemakers, tailors and bakers, and they comprise 58 percent of the economically active population.

This group, especially the peasants, has benefited from Sandinista policy, and Gorostiaga says that between this group and the patriotic producers, 70-80 percent of the economically active population have reason to support the FSLN. Their interests were reflected in the way they voted on November 4, when the Sandinistas received 63 percent of the total.

The FSLN has emerged from the elections with increased legitimacy both at home and abroad. The elections seem to have helped the Sandinistas regain some support from Western Europe that had become lukewarm over the past two years. Socialist International leader Willy Brandt, a long-time defender of Nicaragua, praised the elections and said the country deserves wide support.

The Sandinistas will also try to consolidate their position at home by trying to reach an understanding with the opposition parties, attempting to prevent them from joining in the hostile, pro-U.S. stance of the Coordinator. Whether or not they succeed will become apparent during the "national dialog" meetings scheduled for the coming weeks.

A truce with a sector of the Miskito guerrilla movement also seems possible following the recent visit of Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera to the Atlantic coast. Rivera, who had been aligned with the Costa Rican-based ARDE, has strongly criticized Stedman Fagoth, the other chief Miskito leader, for his close ties to the *Somocista*-dominated FDN. A truce with Rivera would leave Fagoth, whose troops seem to have been resorting more and more to terrorist attacks, increasingly isolated. The Sandinistas, for their part, at least seem willing to grant the Miskitos a significant degree of political, cultural and economic autonomy.

Although stronger politically, the Sandinistas face an increased U.S. threat—Reagan's "pathological desire to destroy Nicaragua," as Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto put it. Even if the U.S. doesn't make good its threats with overt military moves, Nicaragua will still face the pernicious economic war of attrition. ■

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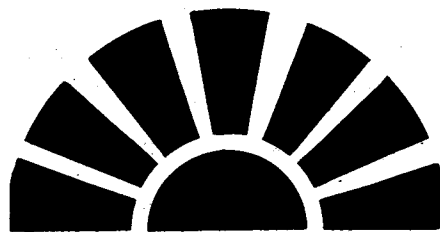
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ITT's 8th Anniversary

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As *In These Times* begins its ninth year of publication we have achieved our highest circulation to date. This week 28,500 people will get this newspaper through the mail or from a bookstore. We expect to end the year with close to 2,000 more subscribers than last year.

Given the near invisibility of the American left, we consider this a substantial achievement. But it is still small potatoes. We believe that we should have, and can have, three or four times as many subscribers as we now have, and we intend to pursue them relentlessly.

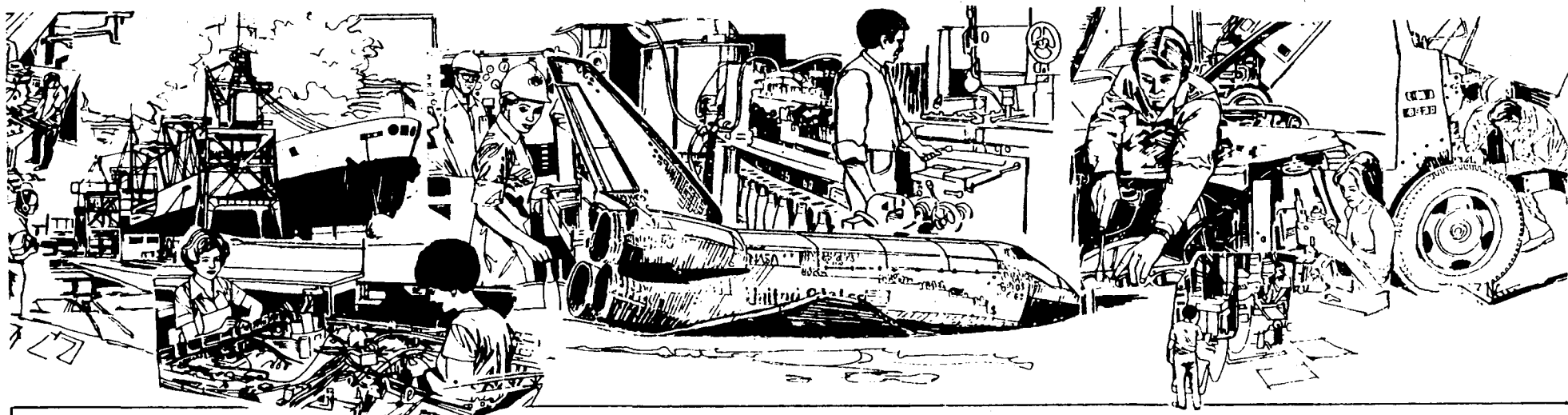
We can do so, however, only with the active support of our readers and friendly organizations. *In These Times* is unique in this respect. We depend on our readers to make up our operating deficit each year and to promote the paper among their friends and associates. That support has kept us going for eight years, and even though we are slowly approaching self-sufficiency, we will always need it to grow and to expand our influence. Our anniversary greetings reflect your support. We are deeply grateful for it.



Cover photo (left to right): sitting—Nicole Ferentz, Lisa Weinstein, Kathleen Gallagher, Sheryl Hybert kneeling—Leenie & Chad Folsom, Grace Faustino, Hania Richmond, Emily Young, Peter Hannan, Cynthia Diaz, Miles DeCoster

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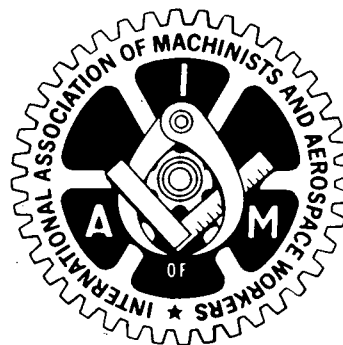
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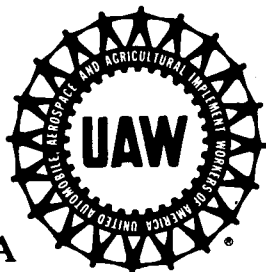
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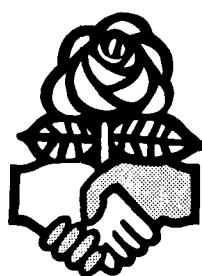
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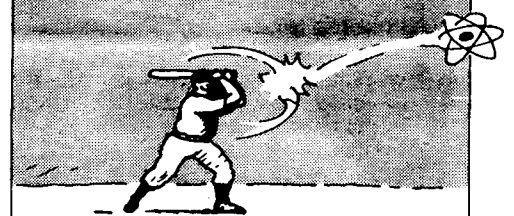
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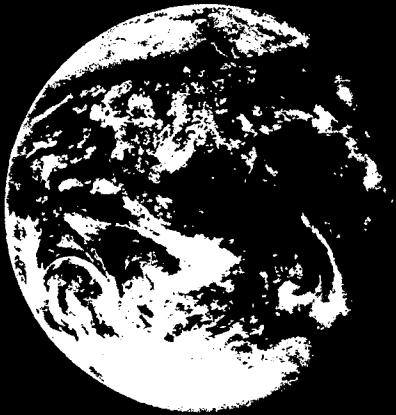
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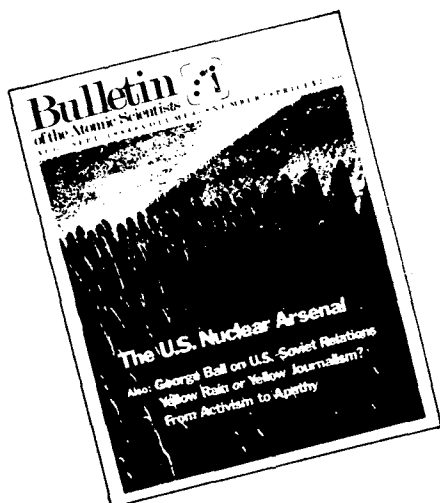
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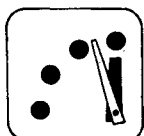
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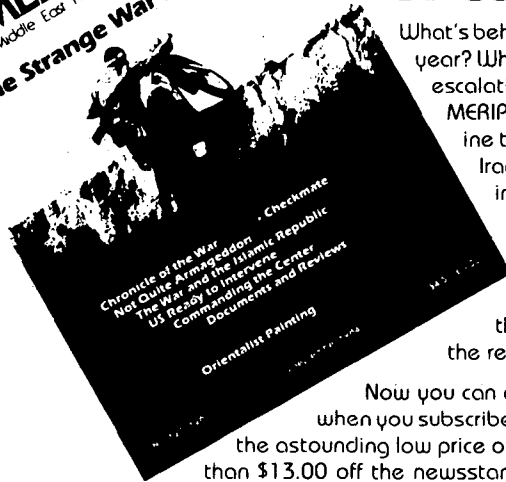
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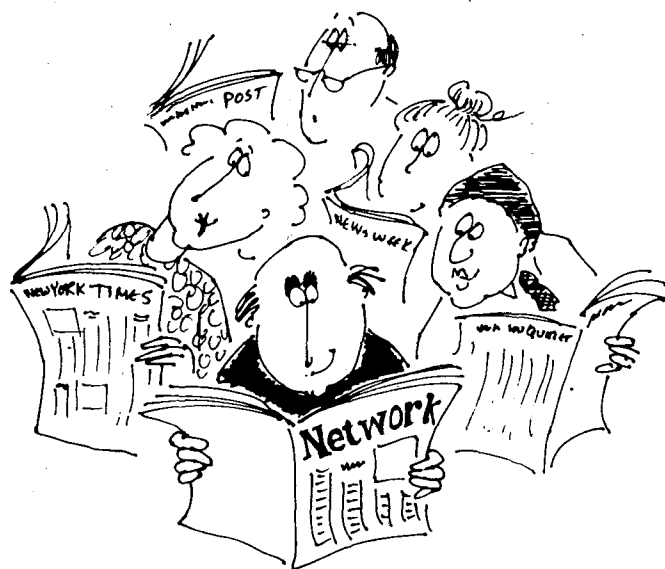
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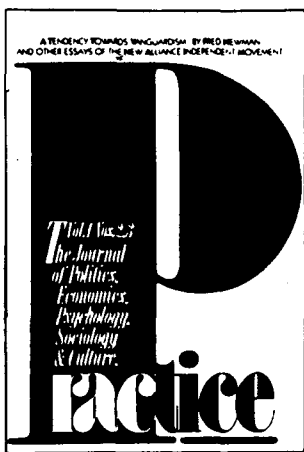
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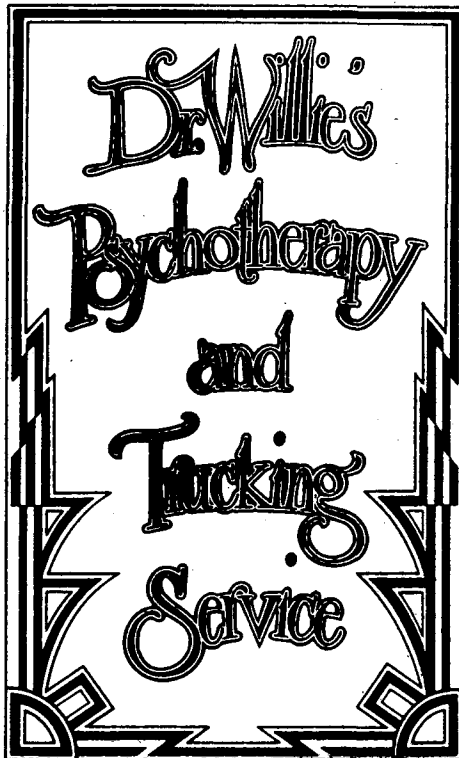
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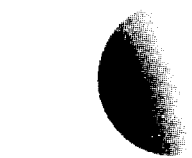
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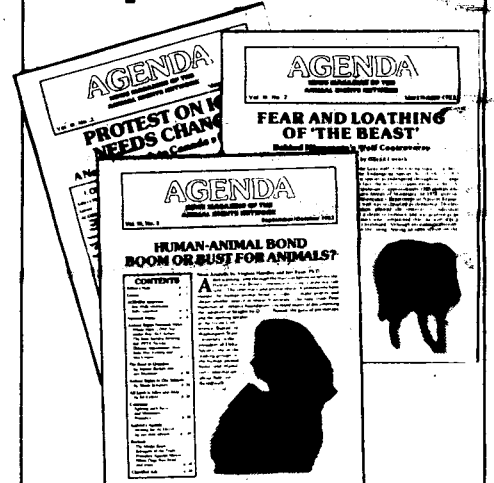
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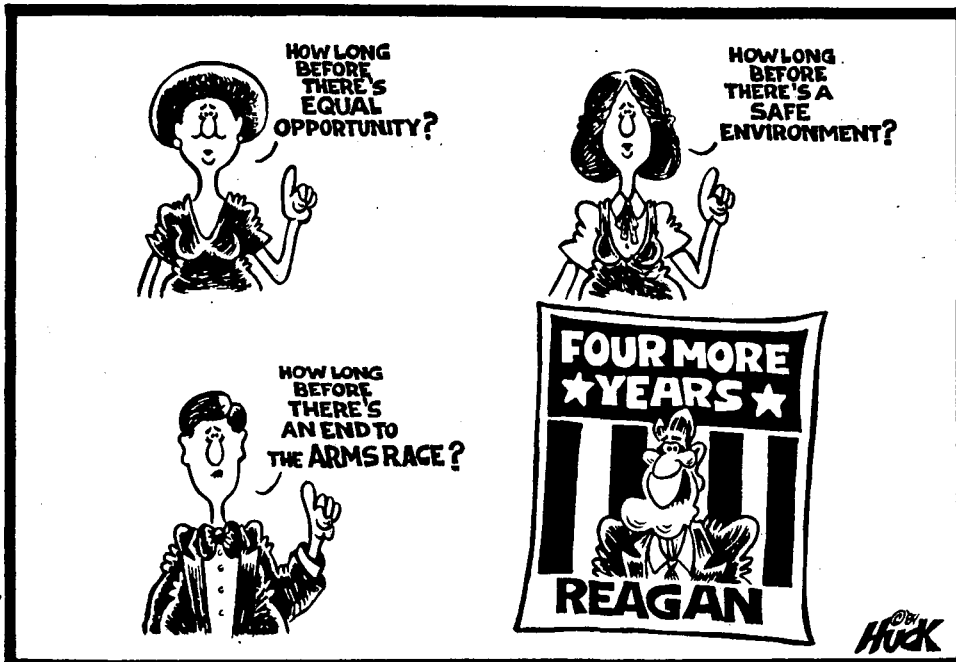
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## EDITORIAL

## The seamless web extends to politics



Whether Ronald Reagan's overwhelming victory November 6 represents a long-term swing to the Republican Party and Reagan-style conservatism is still unclear. True, the Democrats' showing in both House and Senate elections was more than respectable in the face of the Reagan sweep. But for the left, both the socialist part and what Reagan calls the special interest groups—labor, the elderly, blacks, Hispanics, feminists and gay rights advocates—one thing is painfully clear: we have no coherent platform from which to address the majority of the American people.

As a loser, Mondale looked good. But his concession speech, which was among

*Reagan got away with seeming to represent the general interest because Mondale accepted the framework of the president's policies, especially more military outlays.*

his most moving appearances, had the ring of liberation theology, not politics. He spoke as if he had a mission to the poor, not to govern our nation. And in so doing, he inadvertently drew attention to the weakness of his campaign. He made it easy for Reagan to speak as the representative of principle and general interest, while painting the Democrats as representative of narrow self-interest in conflict with the well-being of the nation as a whole.

The irony of the campaign was that the special interests Mondale was accused of representing, or giving in to, constitute a majority of the population—or would, if he truly represented them—while the special interests that Reagan actually represents is the smallest and most elite in the nation. Yet a substantial majority of the voting population accepted Reagan's definition of special interest, while many among Mondale's target constituencies didn't bother to vote, or voted for Reagan.

Two Reagan themes worked most strongly against Mondale, the special in-

terest charge and the charge that the Democrats stand for big spending and taxes. These stuck, and Reagan got away with seeming to represent the general interest, for one simple reason: Mondale accepted the framework of Reagan's policies, and especially the idea of an increase in military spending.

Mondale tried to have it both ways. He tried to convince the corporate community that unlike Reagan he was responsible—to them—and that he was a leader who knew the budget had to be brought more closely toward balance, and that taxes would have to be raised to do it. But he also appealed to the "special interest" groups by supporting programs that would cost a good deal of money, which could only cause further imbalances. Unless, of course, there were massive cuts in military spending, and that he explicitly opposed—calling instead for a slightly smaller increase than Reagan wants.

Reagan, of course, has consistently attacked programs that he says create dependency on government. He argues that an end to government interference with business and social spending will release a surge of entrepreneurial vigor and sustained recovery. And yet Reagan has engaged in the greatest government pump priming since World War II military spending finally got the country out of the Great Depression of the '30s. If the despised Keynesianism of the New Deal was based on deficit spending, what can one say about the Reagan deficits? And who can doubt that whatever recovery we are enjoying is the result of military Keynesianism?

But Mondale would have left this intact, or modified it but slightly. And in that context, his promises to increase spending for blacks or for the elderly, or on education or the environment could only be seen as more money out of the pockets of middle-income families. Without attacking the framework of our national priorities, giving to one group means taking from another. The result, as post-election polls prove, is that Mondale won a majority of votes only from those in the lowest income brackets. And most of those were probably negative votes by people most detrimentally affected by Reagan's policies or most offended by his priorities.

Coming out of the election, the Democrats are leaderless and directionless, and the left, both socialist and non-socialist, is not much better off than it was four years ago. On the plus side, we can count the advances made by women mobilizing politically and gaining recognition, both with Geraldine Ferraro's nomination for vice president and with the large number of women nominated for lesser offices.

And we can count Jesse Jackson's campaign and the entrance of blacks into the political arena on a large scale. Jack-

son's campaign had serious negative aspects, especially his embrace of Louis Farrakhan and his own anti-Semitic remarks, which only increased the racial polarization that any first black presidential candidacy would have intensified. But his role as a catalyst in politicizing blacks will be an enduring positive result. And then, too, Jackson was the only contender—after George McGovern withdrew—to tie domestic reform to opposition to American neo-colonialism and a reduction in military spending.

But despite Jackson's rhetoric about a rainbow coalition, the various components of a potential left majority acted too much like the special interest groups they were accused of being. The AFL-CIO leadership pursued its goals while accepting the framework of the cold war and the Reagan military buildup. The freeze leadership stuck narrowly to its issue, NOW and other feminist leaders concentrated on running women for office. And so it went.

But especially now that the days of steady American corporate expansion are over, government policies are a seamless web. We cannot have adequate Social Security, universal quality education, a high level of health care for the public, true environmental protection and other socially useful and desirable programs if we continue to spend untold billions of dollars on armaments. And we cannot reduce armaments as long as our elected leaders are committed to acting as world policeman for Corporate America, and continue to use the Cold War as an excuse for intervening against Third World

movements of national independence.

"Practical" leaders and organizers of a wide range of social and political organizations on the left have argued over recent decades that their organizations should stick to their particular issues and demands. They say that to take on the whole framework in which public policy is formed—and especially foreign policy—is impractical and self-defeating. But the Mondale campaign, which was the creation of the labor movement and NOW, indicates that the opposite is true, that if you accept the framework of the Cold War, the U.S. role as international policeman and the massive military spending that is its inevitable consequence, there is no room left for concern for the majority of our citizens who require social intervention for employment, health, education, environmental protection and security in old age.

These issues are of concern to Americans right now. But to make them credible requires a change in our public concept of the role of the United States in the world community and our priorities as a nation.

In his final political campaign, Ronald Reagan appeared to take the high ground. He spoke of making America great again, of reviving pride in our accomplishments and hope for our future. Given the timing of the recovery—at its peak during the campaign—that rhetoric may have been unassailable. But the assault that was attempted fell flat because it was correctly seen as sour grapes. One cannot challenge the success of Reagan's presidency while accepting the underlying basis of it. ■

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# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

THERE IS MUCH I AGREE WITH IN Fred Clarkson's thoughtful letter to *ITT* (Oct. 31). "Political strength will emerge from basic organizing and credibility at the local, county and perhaps state level...."

I entirely agree and the Citizens Party has run more than 200 races at various levels, winning something more than a dozen. We hope to run more such races between now and 1988. It is our experience, however, that it is possible to get substantial numbers of candidates for such races only if they feel they are part of a national enterprise, and not isolated political adventurers. The only way to do that is to run national campaigns.

Also, such campaigns *do* raise issues. This year, as you well recognize, there was a terrible paucity of serious debate. Yet wherever Sonia (her especially) and I went there was, if only for the duration of our visit, some serious political discussion and through press coverage it radiated well beyond the small audiences we reached in person.

As one who has written about politics for 30 years, I understand how difficult it is to be taken seriously. But we decline to accept the sports-page mind set that equates seriousness with the number of votes. We believe—and our campaign experience sustains that belief—that there are significant numbers of people, even some press people, who think that political ideas and values have intrinsic value. The Citizens Party and the values it represents are much better known now because of our campaign. And although the numbers are small in proportion to the general population, something important can begin with only a few thousands.

We met enough like-minded people to agree enthusiastically with your assertion that "this is no dream—it is a possibility...." Lord knows, we can't be confident that ours is the only or even the best way to build a left with significant political weight, but doing

something is better, we believe, than doing nothing, and the left has been doing very little in recent years. The Mike Harrington/DSA strategy simply hasn't worked. It was always too timid and there was scarcely any liberal wing of the Democratic Party to work with. After yesterday's catastrophe, whatever lingering liberal impulse the party had is certain to have diminished. The only significant part of the old coalition is the blacks. Despite that, they will be screwed again by the party as they were after the convention. With two-thirds of the whites voting for the Republicans, the blacks should have enormous influence within the Democratic Party but, as you know, that just isn't going to happen.

So the American political scene is in a tremendous state of flux. With the influence of the old political parties already (and, I think, permanently) on the wane, the situation is (or should be) encouraging for new parties, but I have no idea of the best way to take advantage of it. I would be grateful for any thoughts you might care to pass on.

Sectarianism obviously has been one of the banes of the left and we of the Citizens Party are trying to avoid it. We of the left must cooperate. It is the values of the Citizens Party that are important, not the party itself, for its value is solely instrumental. If its fate is to be only an evolutionary stage, so be it. And it, of course, is open to change; it is young enough to be flexible, not in principle, but in means.

—Dick Walton  
Warwick, R.I.

## TELL ME IT AIN'T SO

TO GET MY MIND OFF THE DEPRESSING reality of the election campaigns this fall, I read a historical romance novel. You know the kind—lots of explicit sex, fantastic adventure and a beautiful young heroine who survives all kinds of misery and adversity before finally being reunited with her one true love to live happily ever after.

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The central horrible situation in which the novel's heroine was caught was a slave breeding farm in Czarist Russia of 170 years ago, at which blond, blue-eyed children were produced for sale to the Ottoman Turks, who supposedly couldn't get enough of blond slaves. (Russians and Turks seem to be convenient villains both in fiction and real life.) The Russian nobleman who owned the farm was rich as a result of his business. I thought I was reading a fantasy.

Then I read the article about "law and economics" (*ITT*, Nov. 7) and was shocked to find that conservative judges in the U.S. today are seriously proposing that "efforts to breed children with a known set of characteristics" to be sold to the highest bidder would be quite in keeping with the best principles of American free enterprise capitalism. It's enough to turn anybody into a socialist.

In the novel, the idea of breeding children with a specific set of characteristics to meet a market demand is so terrible that in order to resolve the story, not only does the heroine escape, but the breeding farm itself is destroyed, and its rich owner is shot dead by a fellow Russian who is repelled by the general, all-around decadence of it all.

Fantasy and reality seem to be merging. Please, tell me it isn't so. Please tell me I've only been temporarily caught in the Twilight Zone. My sanity is at stake.

—Nella Tillman  
Lansing, Mich.

## BRIGHT SPOT

I JUST READ THE REVIEW (*ITT*, OCT. 31) of *An Unfinished Song: The life of Victor Jara*, and it is sticking in my mind. Is the name of the high-ranking officer who so "bravely" beat Jara at the sports complex known? I can visualize Jara defiantly singing a final chorus of "Venceremos," though he knew his last sun had dawned. I would like to spread the information contained in this review to other people. Men and women such as he shine like supernovas and renew my own determination.

—Danny J. Bobrow  
Socorro, N.M.

## INVESTIGATE

THE AD "WE'RE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY, TOO" (*ITT*, Oct. 17) is astonishing.

Health concerns be damned. *ITT* readers are supposed to back the tobacco capitalists—welfare recipients with their growers' subsidies, really—simply because workers are employed.

I realize *ITT* needs the tobacco growers' money. And you can count on us to detect the flawed values and logic of the ad.

Besides, shouldn't *ITT* readers take some pity on the tobacco industry? After all, *ITT* is part of the tobacco industry's support system, too.

Indeed, capitalism is cunning and money is insidious.

May *ITT* readers now have an investigative article on the Bakery, Confectionary and Tobacco Workers International Union local 203 T, which paid you for this space?

—Lee Baxandall  
Oshkosh, Wisc.

## NO. 1 KILLERS

I WAS EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED TO see the ad entitled "We're the Tobacco Industry, Too" (*ITT*, Oct. 17). I think it is appalling that the name of Dr. Martin Luther King and causes such as supporting health care for the elderly and Social Security as well as the voting rights act were used in the ad to promote tobacco.

The ad has all the hallmarks of the slick advertising campaign put on by R.J. Reynolds. In particular, the ad says, "Everyone knows there's a controversy over smoking." This is a lie. There is not one reputable scientist in the world who says that smoking is harmless: 350,000 people die in this

country as a result of smoking-related diseases.

It's true that the tobacco industry creates jobs, but it's also true that smoking is the chief single avoidable cause of death in the U.S. It is very disappointing to see *In These Times* publish a purposefully misleading ad created by America's number one killer industry.

—Lawrence White  
Executive Director

Californians for Nonsmokers' Rights

## THE WRONG IMPRESSION

THE HEADLINE OF MY ARTICLE ENTITLED "South Africa-Mozambique truce is a FRELIMO victory," that appeared in the November 7 issue of *In These Times*, gave an impression less ambiguous than the tone of my article had intended. While it is true that the negotiations were initiated by Mozambique, whether they are a victory or not depends on what happens in the future. Many problems remain.

—Allen Isaacman  
Minneapolis, Minn.

## WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...

IN RESPONSE TO EDITOR JIM WEINSTEIN's reply to my letter criticizing *ITT* for the full-page ad, "We're the tobacco industry, too" (*ITT*, Oct. 17), I would like to respond to Weinstein's reasons for stating, "I would gladly run another such ad." These reasons are, first *ITT*'s financial difficulties, second, that other newspapers run ads that are in opposition to their editorial views, and third, that the tobacco workers face loss of employment if the industry goes bankrupt.

I sympathize with *ITT*'s financial plight. I would, however, encourage Weinstein to seek other means of remedying that condition. Foremost of these reasons is that taking advertisements that depict the labor-management committee of the Tobacco Industry attempting to justify its existence seems to be in the same category as any advertisement for smoking. Federal law prohibits the advertising of cigarettes on television. Weinstein would say (as he did in his response to my first letter) that Congress, by taking this stand, has thereby infringed upon the freedom of the press. I would like to point out to Weinstein that all freedoms come with responsibilities, and when a given freedom threatens the good of the community, the community may legislate against that freedom. This is a political issue and not, as the editor suggested, a moral one.

I share Weinstein's concern about tobacco workers losing their jobs. He should recall that the idea of retraining workers for new jobs is not only the conventional answer to technological unemployment, but is also a major policy of those unions where workers face job phase-out.

Finally, Weinstein stated, "I'm not so hostile myself [to smoking] as to think that anyone who smokes or wants to argue for it is beyond the pale." Is the editor aware that the research on the health effects of cigarette smoke to non-smokers is now well documented? If not, I refer him to the recent surgeon-general's report on this topic.

What political rights do individuals need in order to win and maintain a safe and healthy environment? I suggest one such right that is relevant to this discussion is the right of people to refuse any project they believe will damage their health or that of future generations.

—Alvin Winder  
Amherst, Mass.

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.



# LIFE IN THE U.S.

By Harry Fleischman

"You're worse than Gene Debs," Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson told Norman Thomas in the summer of 1918. "If I had my way, I'd not only kill your magazine but send you to prison for life."

Editor of *The World Tomorrow*, a Christian pacifist magazine, Thomas had won this attack from the government's top World War I thought-controller because his magazine defended civil liberties, exposed government mistreatment of conscientious objectors and questioned government war policies. The article that set Burleson off was one by Thomas that protested American military intervention against the 1917 Revolution in Russia.

Burleson failed to stop *The*

## Norman Thomas found the glory in the pursuit of justice.

*World Tomorrow* from publishing only because Thomas' friend Nevin Sayre (who happened to be the brother-in-law of President Woodrow Wilson's youngest daughter) intervened with the president. "I don't think this is seditious," Wilson told Sayre, "and I'll tell the Post Office and Justice Departments that Thomas shouldn't be sent to jail. But you go and tell Norman Thomas that an English historian once said, 'There is such a thing as an indecent display of private opinions in public!'"

Thomas' continued "indecent displays of private opinion in public until his death in 1968 gave him the reputation as "the conscience of America." And while Norman Thomas, who was born 100 years ago November 20, never came close to being elected in his six races for the presidency, he has been more of a mover of American political and social life than many who were elected.

How was this possible? He never got more than 2.2 percent of the vote for president. Yet, as a *Reader's Digest* ad in 1978 emphasized, "He never got elected. But he altered our government. For years, people thought his Socialist ideas outlandish. Yet the hard-luck years of the '30s saw many of his theories, for better or worse, put to practice. And the role of our government was changed, perhaps forever."

The 1932 presidential campaign took place at a time of grim misery and rapidly growing mass unemployment, 25 percent for white workers, 50 percent for blacks. As the Socialist presidential nominee Thomas urged social ownership and democratic management of the nation's major industries and natural resources, but his main stress was on immediate demands to ameliorate the depression. His platform called for \$10 billion for federal public works; unemployment relief; plus laws to acquire land, buildings and equipment to put the unemployed to work producing food, fuel, clothing

and homes. The platform also called for compulsory unemployment insurance; free public employment agencies; old age pensions for men and women 60 years old; abolition of child labor; the six-hour day, five-day week with no wage reductions; aid against mortgage foreclosures to farmers and homeowners; health and maternity insurance and adequate minimum wage laws.

Neither the Republican nor Democratic platforms showed comparable understanding of the nation's needs. The Democratic platform called only for repealing Prohibition and "balancing the budget"! Though when elected, Franklin D. Roosevelt used many of Thomas' planks to build his New Deal.

While Thomas was frequently critical of Roosevelt, he noted that Roosevelt had overcome a sense of panic in the nation and had restored popular faith in the possibilities of effective democratic action through the ballot box. If Roosevelt hadn't been elected, Thomas later conceded, "maybe we Socialists would have got stronger, but I'm afraid the American fascists—of the type of Huey Long or Father Coughlin—or even the Communists would have come into the picture." Roosevelt's New Deal, he added, "was certainly the salvation of America, and it produced peacefully, after some fashion not calculated I think even by Roosevelt, the welfare state and almost a revolution."

Born in Marion, Ohio, Nov. 20, 1884, the son of a Presbyterian minister, Norman Thomas was graduated from Princeton in 1905 as valedictorian of his class. When he worked in a settlement house on New York's lower West Side, he became acquainted with bitter, soul-searing poverty, and when he became a Presbyterian minister in 1911, he determined to preach the social gospel. But he had little contact with Socialists and voted in 1912 and 1916 for Woodrow Wilson.

In a 1915 class letter to his fellow Princeton alumni he wrote: "With all my love for Princeton I sometimes think, unjustly of course, that my education really began when I left there and that not the smallest part of it has been the life here in this district."

At the same time, as a devout Christian, Thomas came to the conviction that Christianity and war were in complete opposition. God, he felt, was not the "God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ" if His servants could only serve Him and the cause of righteousness by the "diabolical" means of war. He gradually came to accept the socialist charge that World War I was imperialist on both sides. In 1917, he spoke for Morris Hillquit, one of the authors of the Socialist Party's anti-war declaration, in his New York mayoralty campaign.

Norman joined the Socialist Party in October 1918. He did so at a time when the party was declining in membership and influence, due both to government suppression and the break-up of the party following the formation of the Third International in 1919.

But, just as he had been suspicious of religious orthodoxy, he wrote, with his application for



## HISTORY

# An unorthodox socialist's vital legacy endures

membership: "My socialism may not be of the most orthodox variety. As you know, I have a profound fear of the undue exaltation of the state and a profound faith that the new world we desire must depend upon freedom and fellowship rather than any sort of coercion."

### Thomas as party leader.

Wherever there was injustice, there was Thomas to fight it. "His courageous championship of exhausted sharecroppers in the South," said A. Philip Randolph, president of the Sleeping Car Porters and top black unionist in the nation, "of persecuted Japanese Americans in World War II, of conscientious objectors in federal prisons, of exploited hospital workers in Northern cities, of Mississippi Negroes fighting for the vote and his life-long campaign for the maximum international cooperation for peace with justice have enriched not only America but the whole world. He has proved that there is something truly glorious in being forever engaged in the pursuit of justice and equality."

But while Thomas, in Roger Baldwin's words, "has often

been a civil liberties agency all by himself, and a most effective one," he made lots of mistakes as a party leader. He let himself be influenced by sectarian Marxists in the '30s and he came too close to the isolationists during the years before World War II.

With hindsight, it appears possible that had the Socialist Party followed the example of Upton Sinclair when he ran his EPIC (End Poverty in California) Democratic campaign for governor in 1934, things might have been vastly different. Sinclair, who never got more than 50,000 votes when he ran for governor as a socialist, amassed nearly a million on the Democratic ticket while running on essentially the same platform. Had the Socialist Party nationally gone into the Democratic Party then, as a Fabian Society, perhaps with the labor movement cooperation, it might have led to a Democratic Party close in spirit to Britain's Labour Party. But Thomas and most Socialist leaders bitterly condemned Sinclair, only to see most party members leave the party to join the New Deal.

Lasting peace and freedom were the lodestars of Thomas'

Norman Thomas, born 100 years ago November 20.

existence and the effort to reconcile the two was his major struggle. Opposing war, he disagreed sharply with the "better dead than red" warmongers. He believed that the only real solution was competitive coexistence between Communism and capitalist democracy, whereby the two systems would renounce military destruction but maintain intensive ideological and economic competition. "We, Communists and non-Communists, will have to live together or die together," he insisted. He felt history proved such coexistence can be successful, citing the Peace of Westphalia, which in 1648 ended the terrible religious warfare between Catholics and Protestants. That peace changed neither the formal creed of either side, nor one's opinion of the other. But Catholics and Protestants turned their competitive energies into other channels.

Before World War II ended, Thomas urged the extension of "material aid for immediate relief and reconstruction of devastated countries without using such aid as a weapon for political domination." In August 1950, Thomas visited President Truman to urge him to address the UN with an appeal for world disarmament under effective international inspection, with the savings from arms expenditures devoted to an international cooperative war against poverty. In October, on the UN's fifth birthday, Truman addressed the General Assembly with the broadest appeal the U.S. had yet made. He linked the appeal for foolproof, enforceable disarmament with a cooperative attack on hunger based on planned industrialization of underdeveloped nations.

In 1956, during the "thaw" following Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, Thomas was asked by Radio Moscow to broadcast his approach to friendship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. He called for Soviet-U.S. acceptance of universal disarmament under effective international inspection and control, free from veto. He called upon the USSR to grant free elections in all the East European countries, and restoration to their former status of Volga Germans, Kalmyks and other peoples admitted by Khrushchev to have been cruelly exiled by Stalin. This talk was broadcast on Aug. 29, 1956, by Radio Moscow—a circumstance unthinkable in Stalin's day, or today.

The last speech that Norman Thomas made was in the fall of 1967, almost 50 years to a day from his speech backing Morris Hillquit for mayor on a Socialist anti-war platform. His 1967 speech was to a conference of 500 national and local labor leaders seeking peace in Vietnam. He suffered a stroke when he returned home and spent the last year of his life in a nursing home.

Harry Fleischman was national secretary of the Socialist Party and managed Norman Thomas' last campaigns for president in 1944 and 1948. Author of *Norman Thomas—A Biography: 1884-1968*, published by W.W. Norton & Co., he is currently chairman of the Workers Defense League, founded by Thomas in 1936.



## BLACK WOMEN

## Writers share rich traditions

**Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation**  
 Edited by Mari Evans  
 Anchor Press/Doubleday,  
 582 pp., \$12.95

By Sandra Jackson-Opoku

*If we have the Word let us say it*  
*If we have the Word let us Be it*  
*If we have the Word let us DO*

—Mari Evans, from *Nightstar*  
 The fickle American reading public, and even more fickle publishing industry, has finally noticed: black women do write. People for whom the name Alice Walker may have only elicited a blank stare a few years back are now agog over the Pulitzer prize-winning novelist.

"*The Color Purple!*" they enthuse. "You should read it. It's great."

But Walker didn't just happen upon the literary scene last year. She's been a published writer for more than 15 years. Nor is she the only black female writer worthy of attention. Black women writers have long been singing in the American literary amphitheater. But because their voices are unamplified, they've had to sing twice as loud. Unread unless they've won the Pulitzer Prize. Unrecognized unless they've appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*.

But because these women have been largely unheard does not mean that they have been voiceless. They are part of a continuum that goes back nearly 200 years; while this book is not a comprehensive historical study, it does recognize this fact.

*Black Women Writers (1950-1980)* is a critical examination of the work of 15 selected writers. It does not claim that these are the only, nor necessarily the best. Their work does represent a great

cross-section of talents and genres—from Pulitzer prize-winners like Gwendolyn Brooks and Alice Walker to lesser-known Maryland poet laureate Lucille Clifton. From pop poet Nikki Giovanni to lesbian poet Audre Lorde. They are novelists like Toni Morrison and Paule Marshall, autobiographical writer Maya Angelou, playwright Alice Childress, and more.

The purpose of the book is two-fold. It provides a forum to legitimize both the work of black women writers and black critics (many of them black women themselves).

The format of the book is effective. Each section begins with a personal statement by the writer in question—why she writes, how she writes, to and for whom she writes. Sometimes they are frank and candid, as in Maya Angelou's: "...I certainly do not adore the writer's discipline. I have lost lovers, endangered friendships and blundered into eccentricity...."

Others reveal the creative eccentricities of the artists themselves. Alice Walker confesses that her characters come to sit with her, walk, talk and tell jokes. Toni Cade Bambara storyboards her film scripts with colored pencils and crayons on giant rolls of butcher paper, acting out the scenes as she goes along.

Still others are revealing in their very elusiveness—Chicago poet Carolyn Rodgers' statements are tight, terse, almost reluctant. Nikki Giovanni's somewhat brash and defensive. Margaret Walker's missing altogether.

The authors' personal statements are followed by critical analyses of their works. And here again, we have some of the best voices in black literary criticism—Stephen Henderson, Eleanor Traylor, George Kent, Eugenia Collier. Their styles range from

weighty scholarly treatise to magazine-style reportage.

Because the contribution of black women to the greater body of black, women's and American literature is largely unsung the temptation might well be to "protect" this seemingly endangered specie—the black woman writer.

But while the critics do not take the offensive tack that many literary critics employ—"We've come to bury Caesar, not to praise him"—they do subject their subjects to stringent scholarship.

Their analyses acknowledge the particular history, culture and ethos of black life. Eleanor Traylor calls upon the jazz tradition in her essay on the works of Toni Cade Bambara: "*The Salt Eaters* is a rite of transformation quite like a jam session. The familiar tune is played, reviewed and then restated in a new form."

And the blues mode in the works of Margaret Walker: "She

[Margaret Walker] locates within her personal experience the public experience of the tribe... like the strategy of the bluesman's song whose tale of woe controlled by form invites the world to dance...[she is] the consummation of the modal heroine of the blues."

The critics, indeed, are the real stars of this show. In language often as creative as the writers they analyze, they celebrate without cheerleading, affirm without fawning.

While laying the foundations for the critical evaluation of a rich but neglected literature, they challenge, take to task, contradict. They critique and they command, assailing failures and acknowledging triumphs.

They do their job well. ■ Sandra Jackson-Opoku is a Chicago journalist, poet and TV scriptwriter. Her work has appeared in *First World*, *Essence*, *Black Enterprise* and *Africa Woman*.

*Black women writers have been unread unless they've won the Pulitzer Prize.*



Writers Maya Angelou (above), Alice Walker (left, below) and Audre Lorde represent a cross-section of talents and genres.

Josephine Herbst  
 By Elinor Langer  
 Atlantic-Little, Brown, 374 pp.,  
 \$19.95

By Marge Frantz

Elinor Langer, one of the finest journalists to emerge from the New Left and the women's movement, has written a remarkable biography about another woman writer. Her new book traces the life of Josephine Herbst, whose reports from Cuba and Spain in the '30s are considered some of the best journalism of the period.

Langer's work has always been distinguished by her incisive intelligence and thoughtfulness, clarity, grace and inventiveness, and this book is no exception. Her *Notes for Next Time*, first published in *Working Papers* in 1973, became a sort of underground classic, xeroxed and passed hand to hand among those trying to figure out what went wrong in the '60s.

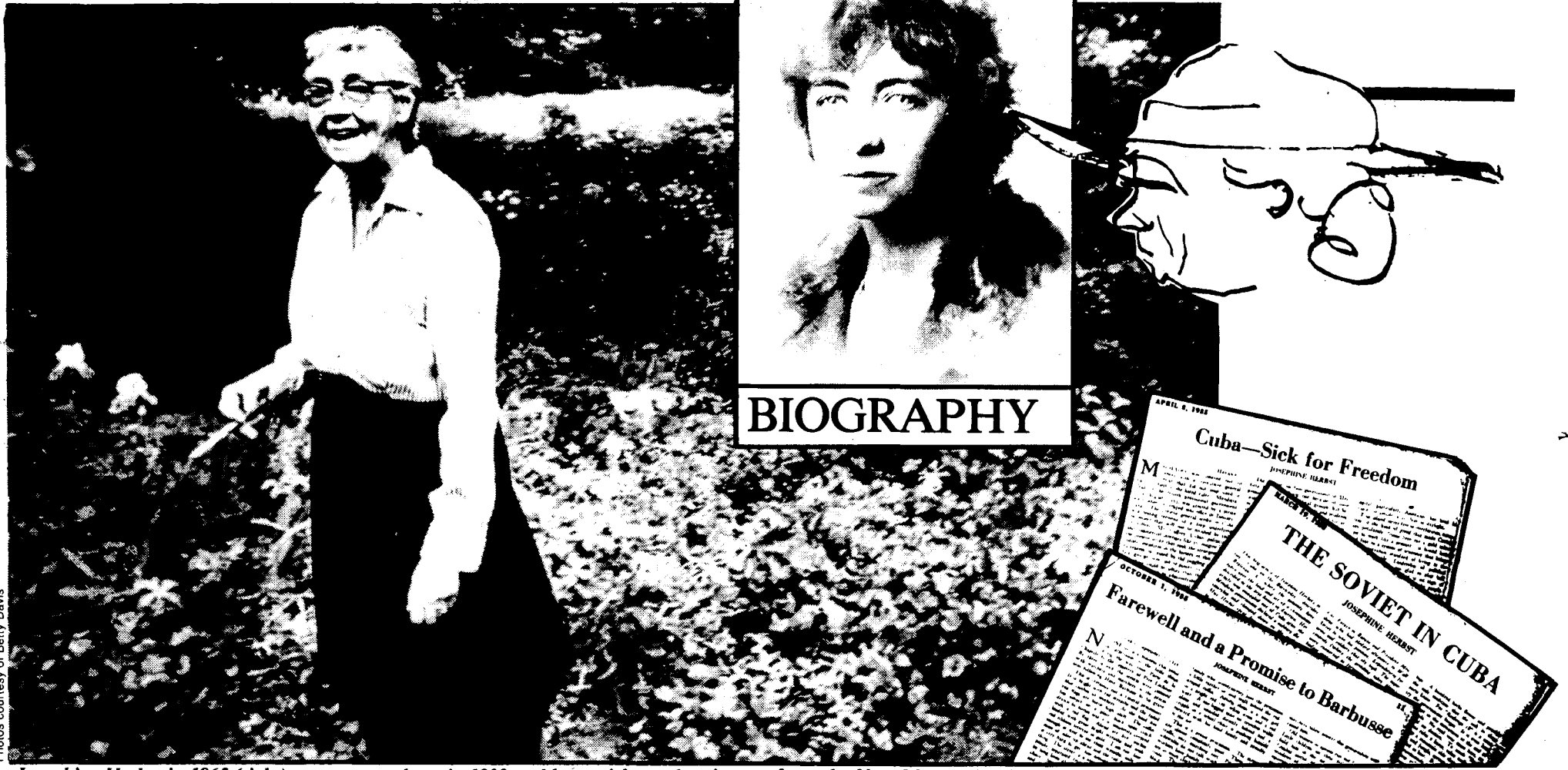
Langer is still searching for and offering instruction from history. As she said in *Notes*, "American radicals have never been able to reach across the decades very well.... But any movement for a different social order in America will not be the work of one generation alone. We have to mend discontinuities in the radical impulse if we can, head off generational misunderstandings...." In reconstructing Herbst's life and times (1892-1969), this book makes a strong and vital contribution to that end.

But its riches are more diverse than that. Herbst's writing and her life were both exceptionally interesting and raise timeless questions: How does a person live with ups and downs, private and public? Without the solace and discipline of a political or social movement, how does one keep one's "radical spirit intact"?

Langer's method in *Notes* of blending the personal and the political is extended and developed here into an art form. For example, Herbst's 10-year relationship and eventual marriage to the Communist writer John Herrmann was a rollercoaster affair, ill-starred from the start, only periodically satisfying and in the end disastrous. Two lesbian affairs, one early in her life, another toward the end, were both marvelously rewarding at their best, but difficult in the extreme, and ultimately self-destructive. Their social illegitimacy caused Herbst to internalize the opprobrium she feared. Langer makes fascinating and compelling stories of these matters of the heart.

On the relationship with Herrmann she is wonderfully discerning and often amusing, but her treatment of the lesbian relationships seems to lack a full appreciation of the power and pervasiveness of the homophobic attitudes of the period and the ruinous effect they would have had and did have on Herbst's feelings about herself and her subsequent actions. But Langer has at least sought out these valuable accounts and made them available for interpretation for the first time. The book is also full of nuggets for literary buffs since Herbst's friends included Ernest Hemingway, Katherine Anne





Josephine Herbst in 1965 (right), a passport photo in 1922 and her articles and caricature from the NEW MASSES in 1935.

# “Josie” Herbst: chronicler of a century

Porter, John Dos Passos and Nathanael West, among others, and we see them close-up and many-sided.

## A family saga.

Langer first discovered a passing mention of Herbst in an obscure essay on '30s fiction, just enough to send her to the library for Herbst's trilogy: *Pity Is Not Enough* (1933); *The Executioner Waits* (1934); and *Rope of Gold* (1939). She was instantly hooked. The three novels are a saga of Herbst's family, a radical version of American history from the Reconstruction period to the end of the '30s. Langer's reaction was “a cross between a sigh of relief and a shout of joy: as if I were a traveler who had somehow gotten detached from my party, and Josephine Herbst were the rescuer sent out to bring me home.... For sheer absorption, for identification, I felt as I had at no other time in my life except when I read *The Golden Notebook*....”

Further research produced more revelations. Beyond the trilogy, Herbst had written four other novels plus a biography, and more than 100 pieces of shorter fiction, criticism, journalism and memoirs. As a reporter, Herbst was on the spot to cover “the first Soviet in the Western hemisphere” in the mountains of Cuba in 1935; resistance to Hitler in Germany the same year; the civil war in Spain, and stories closer to home such as the farmers' rebellion in the Midwest in the early '30s and the Flint, Michigan, sit-down strike in 1937. She was published extensively in the '20s and '30s in a wide range of periodicals, won high praise and was often ranked as an equal of Dos Passos and Hemingway.

Langer's liberal quotations from Herbst's prose persuaded the reader of her estimate: “the fiction was remarkable particularly for its modern representations of women; the journalism was breathtaking in the daring and skill it had taken to get it and in

the vividness of the human images it evoked; the criticism had obviously been written by a great student and lover of literature; and as for the memoirs, they were as graceful in prose and as rich in substance as any I had ever encountered.”

The big question then cried out—why was she virtually unmentioned in the literary histories? Why had radicals like Langer never heard of her? Why was her work buried, forgotten? Langer's anger is two-fold: Herbst's gender, her innate feminism, her strong women characters did not commend her work to male-critics; and her refusal to recant her leftist allegiances placed her outside the pale. “She was thus a victim not only of the patriarchal literary establishment but also of the cultural anti-Comintern pact whose adherents had governed American letters since the end of World War II, and—now that I was thinking about it—weren't those groups pretty much the same?”

Members of the same establishment had rediscovered Herbst in her later years and had become valued personal friends. They enjoyed Herbst the person but they were not sympathetic to her underlying understanding of individuals as inextricably embedded in a social context. By the '50s, this older set of assumptions had given way to a very different literary mode—private and existential explanations of human beings.

Herbst's politics are not simply described, and Langer's discussion of their complexity is one of the merits of the book. She was born a rebel before she ever read Marx or met a real, live radical. The stories of her family's history that she absorbed from her mother, a natural story teller, implanted a hatred of oppression. Add to that the entrapment she felt growing up in Sioux City unable to save enough money for college.

It was in college finally at Berkeley when she was 26 that she met her first leftists and then

soon went to Greenwich Village in 1920, where she quickly became part of a group of young writers, working as an editor for Mencken's magazines. After an affair with Maxwell Anderson that ended with an abortion he wanted and she did not—which was followed by her closest sister's death due to a botched abortion—she went to Weimar Berlin to recuperate and write. Then to Paris where she joined the expatriate crowd and met John Herrmann. They returned to the U.S. in the late '20s and John joined the Communist Party not long thereafter.

Herbst apparently was never asked to join the Party but was very much a part of the circle. She felt it was largely a male preserve—although that wasn't as common an experience as Langer assumes. Though Herbst always saw herself as part anarchist, she identified closely with the Party while remaining a friendly, sometimes mocking, critic in its more obtuse moments. “I think I shall have to be a fellow traveler all my days so far as my work goes, no matter what my sympathies are, because I need to express so much more than they [the Communists] would ever feel, at this

peasants she had known to be certain which side she was on; she would never recant: “We are not only what we are today but what we were yesterday and if you burn your immediate past there is nothing left but ashes which are all very well for those heads that like nothing better than to be sprinkled with ashes.”

## McCarthyism.

She held fast through the trials of McCarthyism, which hit her early on. Starting in 1942 after FBI interrogation, she was fired from a wartime job preparing radio scripts for transmission to the Germans. Langer's treatment of Herbst and the witchhunt is one of the gems in this book. She gets the political context and history exactly right, the crucial relations between the '30s and the ensuing years. She also turns up two especially interesting scoops as she researches FBI files, interviews participants and pieces it all together.

One revealed that Katherine Anne Porter, when interviewed by the FBI, put her considerable fictional talents to work and invented scurrilous stories about her presumable bosom friend “Josie,” something Herbst never knew.

*Herbst's politics are not simply described, and Elinor Langer's discussion of their complexity is one of the merits of this book.*

moment anyhow, important,” she wrote Katherine Anne Porter in 1933.

She returned from Spain far more critical, having observed internecine fighting within Republican ranks and a close-up of political terror. She turned to writing, away from direct political work. But her allegiances were unshakeable. She had only to recall the Cuban and Spanish

The second had to do with Herrmann's relation to Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers when Herrman was a member of the so-called Communist underground in Washington in 1934. Langer's discussion of the historical/political context of the Hiss case is extraordinarily good, the best I have read. It is, among other things, a beautiful illustration of a little understood but im-

portant fact leftists need to know: the contradictions engendered when political and historical issues get enmeshed in the legal process and the utter inability of most legal minds to grasp them. She makes clear, also, that the Hiss case will never be understood in depth until we have invoked “the statute of limitations on the political secrets of the '30s, which, like most secrets, have gathered most of their power from being hidden from view.” She puts her finger on what is ultimately involved: the “reversal of values that accompanied the transmutation of the '30s into the '50s.”

Langer's essential project is more than to bring Herbst back to life as a person. It is also to get Herbst's work back into print. As Langer wrote in an article, “If anyone has captured the pattern of American history from the 1860s to the 1930s as well as she has in the trilogy, I have not read it; in no other memoirs that I know of are the political and literary dilemmas of the '20s and '30s more artfully or sympathetically portrayed; if you put together her unpublished and published writing, there are few American women who have left a record of this century at once as wide and as deep.” As a result of Langer's labors, the Feminist Press has just republished *Rope of Gold*, and Warner Books has scheduled the other two volumes of the trilogy for publication in 1985.

Anyone who has lived through or studied the '20s and the '50s and watched them move joltingly into the '30s and the '60s can more easily resist discouragement in the '80s. Observing Josephine Herbst move through these earlier decades experiencing good times and bad is a bracing tonic we can all use right now. ■ *Marge Frantz, one of the characters interviewed in the film Seeing Red, teaches courses on McCarthyism and the '30s at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is writing a biography of Alexander Meiklejohn.*



By Pat Aufderheide

While image politics held the high ground in headlines this fall, American reality may have been addressed more frankly in the season's science fiction films. There, as it has been with science fiction since its origins in utopian fantasy, outer space is a paved road to inner space.

Science fiction has been having a heyday recently, with more to come at Christmas in the shape of *Starman* and *Dune*. And you have to look no farther than your local computer store for part of the reason. Filmmakers as much as other artists love to play with the magical aspects of new technology. It's one way to regain perspective—make a human mark—on machinery that threatens to run our lives. Look at the victory of human beings over their own cyborg creation in the runaway hit *The Terminator*.

But at least as big a part of science fiction's appeal is its ability to express social tension that may be too tense to talk about out loud. Indeed, science fiction seems to flourish in periods when official consensus—even jingoism—papers over popular confusion.

But as we stand in the backwash of the Great Society we can cultivate a certain fondness for simpler days in the '50s, when our science fiction regularly delivered up monsters from the id, who were leading the charge in the return of the repressed. The news that our mass cultural artists are bringing us from beyond the void these days is that the new age of monsters may be right on the surface of society.

Science fiction is always social criticism in one or another guise, but rarely so explicitly as in John Sayles' most recent film, *The Brother from Another Planet*. For Sayles, science fiction is a transparent vehicle to reveal the worlds within our own society. Our eyes are those of the alien (Joe Morton), a runaway intergalactic slave who crash lands at the end point of the old underground railway—125th Street in Harlem.

Mute but empathic, and with a gift for healing electronic hardware, he fits right into the separate world of Harlem. To Harlemites, the alien's planet is no weirder than the world below 110th Street, and it is policed by louts who look like average cops from downtown.

The film both celebrates the vitality of Harlem's subculture and spotlights its ironies through confrontations between the people of Harlem—welfare workers and a welfare mother, junkies and dope peddlers, drunkards and the bartender—with the hapless naïf.

More an essay than a drama, the film works in pieces. Like all of Sayles' own productions, *Brother* is workmanlike and naturalistic, attempting to capture the psychology through situation. Execution falters when other actors can't match the evocative Joe Morton, but the film's flatness may not be traceable to production quality.

The realities it tackles may be more outrageous than social realism can handle. It has both feet firmly planted in a real world no one wants to deal with at the moment.

The pervasive alienation that mood bespeaks is better evoked in the punk expressionist film *Repo Man*, a raw-edged and off-beat movie from California that makes a kind of bicoastal couple

## ARTS»ENTERTAINMENT



## FILM

## Sci-fi discovers new enemies

with *Liquid Sky*, which was a poignant look inside the nihilistic world of New York punks circa 1982. In both, the central figures are young people with nothing to hope for beyond their own capacity to express their despair; and in both, if the aliens promise to destroy civilization as we know it, this could be good news.

In *Repo Man*, our hero Otto (Emilio Estevez) gets a job repossessing cars, one of which carries space-alien treasure. For Otto's mentor Bud (Harry Dean Stanton), repo men are somewhere between the secular priests and

the police of civilization. Stuck with a work crew composed of the stupid and the deranged, Bud flogs them with their duties as guardians of capitalist morality.

He is convinced that order would be restored if we could just find out how much everybody owes, and *make them pay*. He has no scruples, of course, about stealing to guard against theft. Even he, bitten cynic, gets caught up in the treasure hunt.

*Repo Man* is more than an expose of cracked logic at the base of consumer society. It uses the fantastic to evoke hunger at the

heart of abundance. The film is dotted with the stripped-down version of consumer products: generic beer, generic toilet paper, generic newspapers (they come in *USA Today* dispensers).

Otto pulls dinner out of the refrigerator in the form of an open tin can labelled "FOOD." The punk hold-up man whose blood gets spattered all over the generic cereal boxes in a convenience store has become a generic youth.

Emilio Estevez, with the mournful eyes he inherited from Martin Sheen, is the perfect punk, a kid whose unquenchable optimism leaks through a sullen exterior. When he takes his best option, leaving the crime-filled streets and surly pseudo-morality of repo men for radioactive bliss beyond, it strikes a chord in the audience. Everyone would like accidental salvation.

But films like *Liquid Sky*, where the heroine flees both punk and straight society to be engulfed by an alien, and *Repo Man* remind us (as do the statistics of teen suicide) that for many young people no price is too high to pay for such luck. Sober adults may talk about the importance of meaningful work. These films make art out of the junk produced by the absence of it.

After the total critique of *Repo Man*, it can be something of a relief to get down to dig-in-the-ribs goofs on consumer society in *Night of the Comet*. In this *Dawn of the Dead* echo made by and for people who actually like mall culture (the producers also made *Valley Girl*), aliens reduce all but an accidentally-saved few to red (of course) dust.

Two valley girls whose Marine father trained them in self-defense and whose peer culture taught them credit card bliss survive holocaust night. Better still, they defeat evil scientists who hunt them for their healthy blood. And best of all, with the help of a few other survivors they begin life again as Moms and Dads and Buddy and Sis, at home in the post-holocaust Garden of Eden, a deserted shopping mall.

*Night of the Comet* puts the far right's fantasies of restored nuclear family life into its proper context: a department-store window display.

From the opening sequence, in which the soon-to-be-deadly comet is hailed by trinket hustlers and hard-boozing barbequers, it's clear the movie will be a friendly sendup of white suburban culture.

In keeping with its unconflicted vision, this film is a clean exercise in Saturday-night-out fun. It looks like a *Fantasy Island* episode done in the mode of *Eating Raoul*.

Plunging past the barrier of irony—irony is, after all, an attitude that requires a firm reference point—is the ultrasophisticated mainstream film *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*. *Buckaroo* superficially looks like a manufactured boys' adventure film.

The difference is that in the old days—pre *Star Wars*—boys' adventure films were rooted in social myths. These postmodern adventure movies—including the movie serial-derived *Star Wars* series and the Indiana Jones adventures—are rooted in mass marketed products that once drew from the myths. Reproductions that have no original, they are gloriously, self-consciously synthetic.

In this adventure, *Buckaroo* (Peter Waller), a car racer/rock star/neuro-surgeon/inventor,

with his trusty band of sidekicks, saves the world from evil aliens (Red—of course—Lectroids), in company with good aliens (Black Lectroids). *Buckaroo* is everything you ever wanted in a superhero, and less; he is all image and action. He is not a person, in fact, but a collection of power surges, arbitrarily labelled good because he is on our side. (If he had been in charge of the Grenada invasion, any lingering questions about its rectitude would be abolished.)

*Buckaroo* talks not to communicate but to create an aura of pseudo-meaning. He talks in slogans that echo ad copy, offering constant comment on other ersatz realities. (Weller is perfect for this; his smoothie act makes Bill Murray look like a Lutheran.)

When *Buckaroo* directs his smoking eyes to a suicidal girl in a nightclub and says, with feeling, "Remember, wherever you go—there you are," his remark makes no difference to her.

The remark itself is revealing. "Wherever you go—there you are" is not a platitude or a truism. It is a scream in the face of platitudes. Even "Have a nice day" is directed to somebody, embodying an intention, however insincere. In the world of *Buckaroo*, rocketing between this world and the 8th dimension, there is no borderline between sincerity and insincerity.

As the term "Yoyodyne," referring to Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, tips you off, director W.D. Richter and writer Earl Mac Rauch are familiar with other artists of the mass culture centrifuge. But *Buckaroo* has none of the dark edge of, say, *Gravity's Rainbow*, whose hero is atomized into a universe that is either completely random or completely paranoid.

In *Buckaroo*, the hero is a happy pastiche of the pop culture landscape, and his lack of personhood—his lack of humanity, in fact—never seems to bother him. Substituting for feeling is action, and the wilder it gets, the more senseless it becomes. Even the bad guy, Dr. Emilio Lizardo (John Lithgow), is a paranoid nut, not a real fascist. They are all beyond good and evil in this movie.

*The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* is a film whose very engagingness tips you off why these are times when Reaganspeak can work. Like *Buckaroo*, Reagan is made up of pieces of the pop cultural landscape, and is defined moment by moment—each one erasing any smudges of history from the last—by aggressive actions.

Like *Buckaroo*, his actions are good because he's on the side of good. He's on the side of good because he sounds good, like a president should. Indeed, if *Buckaroo*'s merely-modest box office success is any guide, Reagan may be stealing *Buckaroo*'s thunder.

In the season's outer space movies, the real instability doesn't come from outside, but from within our society. Maybe Arnold Schwarzenegger knew something when he opted for the role of cyborg instead of hero in *The Terminator*.

The walls around old concepts like the future, integrity and even basic concepts such as self and other, are crumbling. Our old enemies, the aliens, are sometimes reconceived not as friends but as tickets out of town. And sometimes, when we meet the enemy, he is us.

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Emilio Estevez (above) in *REPO MAN*. John Lithgow (left) and Peter Waller in *BUCKAROO BANZAI*.





# Target

Continued from page 32

Volga, is the site of the largest Soviet car manufacturing plant. The 110,000 workers at the factory produce automobiles sold in 70 different countries. Among the models retailed are the popular Lada and Zhuguli cars.

The children of these workers attend one of a number of Young Pioneer Camps which are named with respect to a given occupation. For example, children from ages seven to 15 who aspire to become cosmonauts can attend a camp called "The Star." At this particular camp, which we visited, the architecture and recreational facilities all capture the theme of space exploration.

Children are not compelled to join a Pioneer Camp but often in summer, when both parents are at work, supervision is best found at such camps. While the camps are very regimented, utilizing marching and identical uniforms, the children do have a hand in the creation of activities and to what extent time is proportioned to a given activity.

When our group arrived we were received with speeches from pioneers and displays of posters they had designed calling for "Peace For All Children." Like all children of the nuclear age, Soviet youngsters hold a concern for the stability of the future. As

I looked at their young, healthy and promising faces from the podium before briefly thanking them for the welcome, I experienced an eerie fright at realizing I was viewing a U.S. nuclear target area.

I was standing in a city whose name is easily pierced by the pin of nuclear strategists as they designate Soviet ground zeroes on a map. Were these children and their factory-working parents really that threatening?

In Kazan, another city on the shores of the Volga and capital of the Tatar Republic, our delegation was summoned to the buses at the pier one rainy evening after a tiring day of exploring the city and talking with its residents.

Initially, still uneasy with jet-lag, I wished the meeting with the city's Friendship Society could be postponed. My curiosity was awakened, however, as we found our four buses speeding through intersections behind a light-flashing police escort. Entering the Friendship Society's building I was fully awakened by a band playing and natively costumed people distributing roses to us all.

Down a hallway lined with still more people we walked; their beaming faces being met with the astonishment of ours. We entered an auditorium, the back section of which held Soviets of all ages clapping in unison, energetically chanting "Mir E Druzhabah"—Peace and Friendship. Banners were draped proclaim-

ing: "Peace to the World" and "No Nuclear Weapons in the West or East!"

Some may assert that this reception was staged. Undoubtedly it took a great deal of organizing, but there were many teary eyes among our group as we absorbed the sincerity in the faces of the jubilant peace workers.

Upon departing the meeting, which included a panel discussion followed by Russian and Tatar dancers and singers, participants broke into song as we made our way back to the buses. As I sat in the bus waiting for others to return, a teenage girl approached the bus from under an umbrella. She tapped the glass on the door next to me and as I turned she wrote the word *mir* in the fog of the window.

She then stepped back and smiled, waving as the bus rolled away. The mist on the window soon engulfed her word and it slowly disappeared. But it mustn't disappear from our minds entirely. Though our trip may be lost to the rhetoric between the superpowers, it remains as a testimony to the fact that peace and friendly relations are attainable. Those people at the Kazan Friendship Society surely don't deserve to reside in a U.S. target area.

We were free to travel independently in Soviet cities without supervision. On such excursions, members of our group distributed peace buttons and post cards and gifts for children, all with the warmest of reactions. In retro-

spect, it was quite astonishing. Here we were, representatives from a country that has historically admonished Communism, yet we received wishes for lengthy lives and peace for our grandchildren's yet to come. Granted, Soviet people are anti-capitalist, but the element of open hostility toward the people of such countries is non-existent.

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Speculative, accusatory comments are what compose the tension between Americans and Soviets and fuels the arms race. They are words and nothing more. The Reagan administration claims the USSR is a "closed society" while ours is an "open" one. We must guard that our open society does not become comprised of closed minds. ■

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# FRIENDSHIP

## IN THE TARGET ZONE

BY DOMINIC TARANOWSKI

*Dominic Taranowski is a recent high school graduate from Vermont who, after visiting the Soviet Union last summer, became "newly aware of the urgency of current cold war conditions."*

"That word is 'September,'" said the young woman behind the counter of a poster shop on Nevsky Prospekt, the main boulevard in Leningrad. She pointed to a series of Cyrillic letters at the base of a poster depicting a young school girl with a bouquet of flowers. "September is when children begin school."

"And what about this up here?" I asked, gesturing at a short paragraph next to the girl with the flowers.

"That is, well, it tells of a new law that was passed making peace the first lesson for children just starting school," she explained. "You see, the teacher will start the class by writing the word 'mir,' that's peace in Russian, on the board. She then explains the word and it becomes the first word the children learn to spell."

I was astounded. Were these the same Russians my president regularly warns me about? The ones who will stop at nothing to secure control over the "free world"? Something is wrong here, I thought. This can't be the same country that the U.S. has tens of thousands of nuclear missiles targeted at. Well, it was and many times during the 25 days I spent with 120 other Americans in the Soviet Union this summer I experienced the uneasiness of realizing that American-made warheads of indescribable destructive force were aimed directly at me.

The tour, which has become an annual event, was called the Volga Peace Cruise. It was so named because of a 10-day excursion down the Volga River aboard the *M.S. Alexander Pushkin*, a substantial cruise ship

that became the sight of many seminars as we traveled between cities.

Each morning discussion groups would assemble in different areas of the craft to be joined by a team of resource people from the U.S. and the Soviet Union who would participate in two-hour talks on such issues as: "The History of U.S.-Soviet Relations," "The Arms Race" and "Soviet Life."

The Soviet resource people were from the Soviet Peace Committee as well as various institutes for international relations and world economics. We had ample time to confer about issues with these people during dinners and other free time.

On one occasion, I joined a collection of young people discussing youth in the USSR and was struck with the realization that young people in the Soviet Union know a good deal more about American culture and society than their counterparts in the U.S. know about the Soviet Union. A young girl from the group inquired: "What American literature do young people read in schools?"

"Well," said Dr. Vsevolod Marinov from the Institute of Economics of World Socialist Systems, who had volunteered his evening to talk with the American high school students. "Of course American literature is very popular here. We read the books of Mark Twain, John Updike, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway, Kurt Vonnegut, Joyce Carol Oates and others. They are very much in demand." He turned to me. "And what about you? What Russian authors did you read when you were in high school?"

"Russian authors? Well, in high school I read...um...let's see...well...Tolstoy?" I was embarrassed to admit that I had read no Russian authors in high school and gained only a limited knowledge of the country's history there.

Togliatti, a comparatively new city of 600,000 people on the

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**'Though our trip may be lost to superpower rhetoric, it remains as a testimony that peace and friendly relations are attainable.'**

